



**FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES
COMPTON MACKENZIE**

Part I

	CONTENTS - CHAPTER	
	Η ΒΙΟΓΡΑΦΙΑ ΤΟΥ (στα Ελληνικά)	
I	THE BRITISH LEGATION	1
II	DIPLOMACY	25
III	POINTS OF VIEW	45
IV	FRESH FIGS	65
V	EARLY ABSURDITIES OF SECRET-SERVICE	107
VI	PERSONALITIES AND POLITICS	139
VII	ONE SEPTEMBER DAY	151
VIII	BACK TO G.H.Q.	174

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

By
COMPTON MACKENZIE



CASELL AND COMPANY LTD
London, Toronto, Melbourne and Sydney

First published, 1931

Printed in Great Britain

TO
MY WIFE

NOVEMBER 30, 1905—NOVEMBER 30, 1930

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I	THE BRITISH LEGATION - - - -	I
II	DIPLOMACY - - - -	25
III	POINTS OF VIEW - - - -	45
IV	FRESH FIGS - - - -	65
V	EARLY ABSURDITIES OF SECRET-SERVICE -	107
VI	PERSONALITIES AND POLITICS - - -	139
VII	ONE SEPTEMBER DAY - - - -	151
VIII	BACK TO G.H.Q. - - - -	174
IX	THE BRITISH SCHOOL - - - -	194
X	THE ENTRY OF BULGARIA - - - -	211
XI	STAFF WORK - - - -	240
XII	HOUSES AND PEOPLE - - - -	278
XIII	THE HURRIED DEPARTURE - - - -	307
XIV	BACK IN ATHENS - - - -	340
XV	THE END OF THE YEAR - - - -	367
	INDEX - - - -	395

PREFACE

*I*N the preface to Gallipoli Memories I announced rashly that my Athenian Memories would occupy two volumes. I find now that they will require at least three. So First Athenian Memories only takes us to the end of 1915. I hope to reach June 1916 with More Athenian Memories and December 1916 with Last Athenian Memories, and I still hope to get the first ten months of 1917 into a single volume to be called Ægean Memories. I recognize that this volume could have been shortened by omitting a certain amount of retrospective autobiography, but it could not have been sufficiently curtailed to avoid three volumes about Athens.

The material I had for the present volume, outside my own memory, has been very slight. Such letters home as have been kept serve to fix a few dates, but little else; and owing to circumstances over which I had no control nearly every document connected with my work in the autumn of 1915 was destroyed. None is better aware than myself of the confusion in this volume; but, though it offend my sense of form, that very confusion manages to represent my own excitable state of mind better than a more deliberate literary artifice might have managed.

I want to emphasize once more the strictly personal character of these memories of war. The passage of time has given me some detachment, but not enough to warrant any claim to be considered a judicious historian. In recapturing the past I have not been able to avoid recapturing some of the old bitterness and bias. If I have been unfair to anybody, it has been with the unfairness inseparable from personal antipathy.

Here and there I have given real people fictitious names, and I have not always indicated when I did so. Over the transcription of Greek names into English I have followed others, a little lazily perhaps, along the road of inconsistency, and to the scholar I can only offer impenitent apologies. Finally, let me insist that every indiscretion and extravagance is my own, and that I have carefully avoided consulting anybody about facts or theories.

Isle of Jethou,
St. Andrew's Day, 1930.

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

COMPTON
MACKENZIE

Following
"GALLIPOLI MEMORIES"
selected by the Book Society
as "The Book of the Month"

ΚΟΜΠΤΟΝ ΜΑΚΚΕΝΖΥ

«Ο ΣΠΙΝΘΗΡΟΒΟΛΟΣ» ΤΗΣ ΙΝΤΕΛΛΙΤΖΕΝΣ ΣΕΡΒΙΣ

Λένε ότι ένας κάτοικος του Ούισκονσιν, με τη νοοτροπία του μέσου Αμερικανού, διασχίζοντας διαστικά τη Σκωτία, έγραψε στη γυναίκα του: «Οι Σκωτσέζοι είναι ένας παράξενος λαός. Σ' αυτούς οι άνδρες φορᾶνε φουστάνια. Καί φυτᾶνε μέσα σὲ ἀσκοτσάμπουνα...» (ἀσκαυλους).

Ἐάν αὐτὸς ὁ μέσος Ἀμερικανὸς εἶχε συναντήσει τὸν Κόμπτον Μακκένζυ, θὰ εἶχε ἀσφαλῶς ἐντυπωσιασθῇ ἀκόμη περισσότερο.

Ὁ βρεταννικὸς τύπος εἶχε βρῆ ἕνα μνημειώδες ἐπίθετο γιὰ νὰ τὸν χαρακτηρίσῃ. Τὸν ἀποκάλεσε «ὁ σπινθηροβόλος». Ἐκεῖνος πὺ σπιθοβολεῖ, πὺ ἀστράφτει.

Καί ἡ εἰκόνα εἶναι σωστή. Ὁ Κόμπτον Μακκένζυ εἶναι μιὰ προσωπικότης μνημειώδους σταθερότητος, ἀλλὰ καί πολὺ παράξενη συνάντια, ὅπως θὰ ἔλεγε καί ὁ Ἀμερικανός...

Παρ' ὅλο πὺ ὑπῆρξε ἕνας ἀπὸ τοὺς πρωταγωνιστὰς τῆς κινήσεως γιὰ ἕνα ἐλεύθερο κράτος τῆς Σκωτίας ὑπηρέτησε τὴ βρε-

ταννική Μεγαλειότητα στην 'Ιντέλλιτζεν; Σέρβις. Είναι συλλέκτης δίσκων — έχει περισσότερους από 10.000 — και συλλέκτης νησιδων επίσης — κατέχει μερικές στο αρχιπέλαγος των 'Εβρίδων. Έγραψε εγθυμα μυθιστορήματα, «Ούισκι εν άφθονία», αλλά και διδλία πνευματικά, «Ο Καθολικισμός στη Σκωτία». Έγινε πρόεδρος των «Συλλεκτηών σιαμέζικων γάτων», αλλά και πρόεδρος του Πανεπιστημίου της Γλασκώδης. Και όλα αυτά αποτελούν αντιθέσεις που δύσκολα συμβιβάζονται. Ο ίδιος σκιστάρισε κάποτε για τους μεταγενεστέρους αυτό που θα μπορούσαμε να το αποκαλέσουμε ψυχολογικό του πορτραίτο. Ένα πορτραίτο με όξεις γωνίες. 'Ιδού το:

«Στην Ιστορία, οι πιο σφοδρές μου αντιπάθειες πηγαίνουν στη βασίλισσα Έλισάβετ και στον Κρόμυελ.

Ο αγαπημένος μου δραματουργός είναι ο Άριστοφάνης. Οι προτιμώμενοι Ιστορικοί μου ο Ήρόδοτος και ο Τάκιτος.

Οι ποιητές της καρδιάς μου είναι ο Δάντης, ο Μπλάιτ και ο Κήτς. Ο ευνοούμενος μυθιστοριογράφος μου ο Σταντάλ.

Άπεχθάνομαι τα άγρια σπόρ. Το καλλίτερό μου είναι το ράκιπυ.

Άπεχθάνομαι το γκόλφ, μα αγαπώ το μπιλλιάρδο.

Προτιμώ τις γάτες από τους σκύλους.

Οι αγαπημένοι μου μουσικοί είναι ο Μπετόβεν, ο Μότσαρτ και ο Σιμπέλιους.

Μισώ τους Ιμπεριαλιστές και βρίσκω ότι ο Τζέφφερσον είχε δίκιο και ο Λίνκολν άδικο.

Πιστεύω στην κοινωνική πρόοδο και νομίζω ότι ή λέξις «δημοκρατία», που χρησιμοποιούμε για το πολιτικό σύστημα της Μεγάλης Βρεταννίας και της Άμερικής, ανταποκρίνεται αρκετά καλά στην έννοια που της είχαν δώσει οι άρχαιοι Έλληνες.

Οι Σκωτσέζοι είναι ο λαός που έχει το πιο ανεπτυγμένο δημοκρατικό αίσθημα του κόσμου.

Οι πολιτικές μου πεποιθήσεις πλησιάζουν πολύ εκείνες του Ήμιον ντέ Βαλέρα (Ιρλανδοσ πολιτικοσ) και του Σαλαζάρ. (Πρωθυπουργοσ της Πορτογαλίας)».

Ο Κόμπτον Μακκένζυ γεννήθηκε το 1883 και είναι σήμερα

87 ἐτῶν. Ἐπειδὴ, ὅπως ἐπληροφορήθηκα, συντομώτατα θὰ κυκλοφορήσουν τ' ἀπομνημονεύματά του — ἀπομνημονεύματα μιᾶς μακρᾶς καὶ γεμάτης ζωῆς ἐνὸς γεμάτου ἀντιθέσεις ἀνθρώπου — ἔκρινα σκόπιμο νὰ τὸν συμπεριλάβω στὶς παροῦσες σύντομες βιογραφίες μου, γιὰ νὰ τὸν γνωρίσουν οἱ συμπατριῶταί μου.

Θὰ μπορούσε νὰ πῇ κανεὶς ὅτι εἶδε τὸ φῶς τῆς μέρας στὰ παρασκήνια ἐνὸς θεάτρου, γιὰτὶ οἱ γονεῖς του ἦσαν φημισμένοι ἡθοιοὶ καὶ εἶχαν δικό τους θέατρο. Τὰ τρία Κ, ὅπως τὸν ἔλεγαν, ἦν πιὸ καθαρά, ἢ Compton Comedy Company. Αὐτὸ ὅμως δὲν τοὺς ἐμπόδισε νὰ στείλουν τὸ γυιὸ τους στὴν Ὁξφόρδη, ὅπου διακρίθηκε εἰδικευόμενος στὴν ἱστορία καὶ ἰδιαίτερα σ' ἐκείνη τῶν τριῶν πρώτων Σταυροφοριῶν.

Ἦταν τότε ἡ ἐποχὴ ποὺ ἡ Βρεταννικὴ Αὐτοκρατορία ἐπρομηθεύετο ἀπὸ τὴν Ὁξφόρδη ἢ τὸ Καίμπριτζ ὅλους σχεδὸν τοὺς ἐπισκόπους τῆς, τοὺς ἀντιβασιλεῖς τῆς, τοὺς πρωθυπουργοὺς τῆς, τοὺς διοικητὰς τῆς καὶ τοὺς πρεσβευτὰς τῆς. Ἀλλὰ λόγῳ τῆς διπλῆς κληρονομικότητός του ὁ Μακκένζυ εἶχε τὸ θέατρο μέσα στὸ αἷμα του. Ἦταν ἓνας γεννημένος ἡθοιοὺς κι' αὐτὸ ἔμεινε σὲ ὅλη τὴ ζωὴ του. Ἡ ἐλκυστικὴ γοητεία του, ἡ ἀξιοθαύμαστη μιμητικὴ του τέχνη, τοῦ ἐξασφάλιζαν μιὰ λαμπρὴ σταδιοδρομίαν ὅταν διαδέχθηκε τὸν πατέρα του στὴν Compton Comedy Company. Ἀλλὰ ἡ σκηνὴ τῆς ζωῆς του θὰ εἶναι πολὺ εὐρύτερη ἀπὸ ἐκείνη τοῦ θεάτρου.

Τὸ 1905, σὲ ἡλικίαν 22 ἐτῶν ἀρχίζει τὸ πρῶτον ἐπεισόδιον. Πανδρεύεται μιὰ συγγραφέα, κόρη πάστορος καὶ τὸ 1908 σκέπτεται ν' ἀκολουθήσῃ τὸ στάδιον τοῦ πεθεροῦ του. Ἀσκεῖ ἤδη τὰ καθήκοντα λαϊκοῦ ἱεροκλήρυκος, μὲ τὴν ἔγκρισιν τῆς ἐκκλησιαστικῆς ἀρχῆς. Αὐτὸ κρατᾷ ἓνα χρόνον.

Τὸ 1911 ἀνακαλύπτει πὼς κυλάει μέσα του σκωτσέζικον αἷμα. Δίνει ἓνα πύδημα κι ἀρχίζει νὰ μελετᾷ τὸ γλωσσικὸ ἰδίωμα τῶν προγόνων του ποὺ εἶναι φοβερὰ δύσκολον. Καὶ γιὰ νὰ ριζώσῃ στὴν προγονικὴ γῆ, ἐγκαθίσταται στὴ σκωτσέζικη νῆσον Μπάρρα καὶ γίνεται μυθιστοριογράφος.

Τὸ 1912 κυκλοφορεῖ τὸ πρῶτον μυθιστόρημά του «Καρναβάλι» ποὺ ἔχει μιὰ «ἀστραφτερή» ἐπιτυχίαν. Πωλοῦνται πεντακόσιες χιλιάδες ἀντίτυπα. Θὰ μεταφρασθῇ σὲ ὅλες τὰς γλώσσας, θὰ

γίνη ταινία τοῦ θωοῦ καὶ τοῦ διηγουμένου κινηματογράφου, ραδιοφωνικὸ ἔργο, ἀκόμη καὶ ὑπερέττα... Εἶναι ἓνα κλασσικὸ βιβλίο τοῦ εἵδους ποὺ ἐπιτυγχάνει.

Τὸ 1914 θρίσκει ὅτι ἔχει εὐθραυστὴ ὑγεία καὶ τοῦ χρειάζεται ἀλλαγὴ ἀέρος. Ἀλλάζει λοιπὸν νῆσο καὶ πηγαίνει στὸ Κάπρι. Ἐκεῖ λαμβάνει χώραν τὸ δεύτερο καὶ ὀριστικὸ ἐπιστάδιο τῆς ζωῆς του. Μεταστρέφεται.

Μέχρι τὴν τῶρα δὲ θέλησε ποτὲ νὰ διηγηθῇ συστηματικὰ τὴ μεταστροφὴ του. (Ἴσως ὁμιλῶ νὰ τὸ κάμῃ προσεχῶς στ' ἀπομνημονεύματά του). Ἀλλὰ τὸν ἴδιο χρόνον κυκλοφόρησε ἓνα ἀπὸ τ' ἀριστουργήματά του — ποὺ στὴν μὲν ἀγγλικὴ τιτλοφορεῖται «Απαίσιος δρόμος», στὴ δὲ γαλλικὴ «Ἀδιέξοδος», ὅπου ὑπάρχουν μερικὰ αὐτοβιογραφικὰ στοιχεῖα.

Διαβάζουμε ἐκεῖ τὰ ἑξῆς:

«Δύσκολα μπορῶ ν' ἀποκαλέσω μεταστροφὴ τὴν εἰσοδὸ μου στὴν Ἐκκλησίαν. Στὴν πραγματικότητά εἶχα ἀνατραφεῖ σὲ ὅλα τὰ δόγματα. Ἔτσι προτιμῶ νὰ τὴν πῶ ἀναγνώρισι καὶ ὑποταγὴ, ποὺ θὰ μπορούσα νὰ τὴν ἔχω κάμει ὅταν ἤμουν στὴν Ὁξφόρδη. Ἀλλὰ ὅταν εἶναι κανεὶς νέος ἀναβάλλει γι' ἀργότερα».

Στὰ 17 τοῦ χρόνιου, τὸ 1900, στὸ φῶρτε τῆς «Belle Époque» ἦταν ἤδη ἑφεδρὸς ἀνθυπολοχαγὸς τοῦ πεζικοῦ. Ἔτσι τὸ 1914 ἐπιστρατεύεται, ἀλλὰ ὡς ὑποπλοίαρχος... Καμμιά φορὰ γίνονται: κατὰ τέτοια στὸν πόλεμο.

Ἐπ' αὐτὴ τὴν ιδιότητα στέλνεται τὸ 1915 στὰ Δαρδανέλλια ὅπου πληγώνεται κι' ἔπειτα ἐδῶ, στὴν Ἀθήνα. Κατόπιν τοποθετεῖται στὴν Ἰντέλλιτζενς Σέρβις, ὅταν ἀρχηγὸς τοῦ τμήματος ποὺ ἔχει τὴν ἔδρα του στὴ Συρία.

Τὴν ταραχώδη ἐκείνη ἐποχὴ ἡ Συρία ἦταν φοιτῶν κατασκόπων καὶ ἡ ἀποστολὴ του εἶναι πολὺ δύσκολη. Ἐν ταῦτοις τὴν περατώνει ἐπιτυχῶς καὶ παρασημοφορεῖται: ἐνδόξως τῆς Βρετανικῆς Αὐτοκρατορίας, τῆς Λεγεῶνος τῆς Τιμῆς, τοῦ Λευκοῦ Ἀστροῦ τῆς Σερβίας κ.α. Ὁλόκληρη συλλογὴ... Ὅταν πολὺ ἀργότερα δημοσιεύῃ τίς «Ἀναμνήσεις» του ἀπὸ ὅλη αὐτὴ τὴν πολεμικὴ περιπέτεια γίνεται μεγάλος σάλος στὸ Λονδίνο, καὶ στὸ Ἰνστιτούτο τῶν Στρατιωτικῶν θυμῶνουν γιὰ καλὰ, παρ' ὅλο ποὺ δὲν

ἐπρόκειτο παρὰ γιὰ ἓνα σωρὸ ἀπὸ ἐτερόκλητες ἀναμνήσεις. Ὁ ὑπουργὸς τὸν μὴνύει γι' ἀποκάλυψη μυστικῶν τοῦ Κράτους, ἡ δίκη γίνεται κεκλεισμένων τῶν θυρῶν καὶ τελικὰ ὑποχρεώνεται νὰ πληρώσῃ μὲν ἓνα ἐλαφρὸ πρόστιμο, 50 μόλις λιρῶν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ν' ἀποσύρῃ ἀπὸ τὴν κυκλοφορία ὀλόκληρη τὴν ἔκδοσι, πράγμα πού τοῦ στοιχίζει μιὰ περιουσία. Ἀλλὰ παίρνει τὴ ρεβάνς του δημοσιεύοντας μιὰ σειρά ἀπὸ ἀναμνήσεις σχετικὲς μὲ τὴν Ἰντέλλιτζεנס Σέρβις. — «Οἱ τρεῖς ταχυδρόμοι», «Τὰ ἄκρα ἐγγίζονται», πού εἶναι μιὰ σάτυρα τῶν Μυστικῶν Ὑπηρεσιῶν.

Ἡ ὅτι ἦταν «κρατικὸ μυστικὸ» τοῦ 1932, δὲν εἶναι πλέον τὸ 1940. Ἡ ἀπαγόρευσις αἶρεται καὶ τὸ «ἐγκληματικὸ» βιβλίο ἐμφα φανίζεται ὑπὸ τὸν τίτλο «Ἀναμνήσεις ἀπὸ τὸ Αἰγαῖον Πέλαγος».

Εἶναι σπάνιοι οἱ στρατιωτικοὶ πού εἶναι καλοὶ συγγραφεῖς καὶ ἀκόμη σπανιώτεροι οἱ συγγραφεῖς πού εἶναι καὶ πραγματικοὶ στρατιῶται. Ἀλλὰ ἡ παράξενη φύσις τοῦ Κόμπτον Μακκένζυ συνένωσε αὐτὲς τίς ἀντιθέσεις καὶ δικαιολογεῖ τὸν χαρακτηρισμὸ τοῦ «σπινθηροδόλου» ἀπὸ τοὺς συγχρόνους του. Πολιτικός, εὐθυμὸς συγγραφεὺς, πρῦτανις Πανεπιστημίου, λογοτεχνικῶς κριτικός, ἀπολογητής, δισκόφιλος, ἀνθόφιλος, ἡθοποιὸς τοῦ κινηματογράφου καὶ τῆς τηλεοράσεως, ἱστορικός, ἐκδότης περιοδικῶν, Σέρ... Εἶναι ἕλα αὐτὰ καὶ πολλὰ ἄλλα.

Δύσκολα θὰ ἐπιχειροῦσε κανεὶς νὰ ἐξερευνήσῃ τὸ ἔργο τοῦ Κόμπτον Μακκένζυ. Θὰ ἔχανετο σὰν μέσα σ' ἓνα δαίδαλα. Ἀλλὰ εἶναι ἓνας λαδύρινθος ὀριζόντιος, μνημειώδης. Ἕνα οἰκοδόμημα πού, παρὰ τὴ δυσαναλογία του, στέκεται, στερεωμένο σὲ γερεὲς βάσεις. Μοιάζει μ' ἓναν καθεδρικὸ νὰ θποὺ ὀρίσκει κανεὶς μεγαλοπρεπεῖς ἀψίδες, ρόδακες, ἀετώματα, χαμογελαστοὺς ἀγγέλους, ἀλλὰ καὶ σαρόνιες φιγοῦρες...

Τὸ 1931 οἱ φοιτητὰι τοῦ Πανεπιστημίου τῆς Γλασκώδης τὸν ἐκλέγουν πρῦτανι καὶ γιὰ τὴν ἐπίσημη Ἀγγλία τίθεται ἓνα τριπλὸν ζήτημα συνειδήσεως. Εἶναι Σκώτος ἐθνικιστής, καθολικὸς τὸ θρήσκευμα καὶ ἀπλοὺς «προλύτης» τῆς ἱστορίας. Διορθώνουν λοιπὸν αὐτὴ τὴν ἀνεπάρκεια ἀκαδημαϊκῶν τίτλων κάνοντάς τον ἐπίτιμον διδάκτορα τοῦ δικαίου στὴ Γλασκώδη καὶ τῆς μοντέρνας ἱστορίας στὴν Ὁξφόρδη. Ἀλλὰ κέρδισε μὲ τὸ σπαθί του τὸ δίπλω-

μα του διδάκτορος της Ιστορίας — αφού του τὸ εἶχαν δώσει — ἐκδίδοντας τὸ 1936 μὲ ἀξιοσημείωτη ἐργασία: «Ἡ Σκωτία καὶ ὁ Καθολικισμός».

Ἀνάμεσα σὲ πολλὰ ἄλλα βιβλία του, ἔχεινα πού παρουσιάζουν ἰδιαίτερο ἐνδιαφέρον γιὰ μᾶς εἶναι ἕνας θαιμιάσιος «Περικλής», «Μαραθῶνας καὶ Σαλαμίνα» καὶ τὸ μεταγενέστερο καὶ σχετικὸ μὲ τὴν ἐλληνικὴ ἀντίστασι κατὰ τῆς γερμανικῆς κατοχῆς, «Ὁ ἄνεμος τῆς ἐλευθερίας». Μέσα στὴν καρδιά του ὁ Κόμπτον Μακκένζυ ἐνώνει τὴν πατρίδα του τὴ Σκωτία μ' ἐκείνη τοῦ Περικλῆ καὶ τοῦ Ἀλκιβιάδη...

Εἶναι ἕνας ἄνθρωπος μ' ἐκπληκτικὴ ἐνεργητικότητα. Τὸ 1952, σὲ ἡλικία 69 ἐτῶν παίζει τὸ ρόλο τοῦ λοχαγοῦ Μπέντσερ στὸ φιλμ τὸ γυρισμένο ἀπὸ τὸ μυθιστόρημά του «Ὀὐίσκι ἐν ἀφθονία». Χωρὶς νὰ λογαριάσουμε τίς τηλεοπτικὲς ἐκπομπές του, τὰ κριτικὰ ἄρθρα του καὶ ὅλη τὴν ὑπόλοιπη πνευματικὴ καὶ κοινωνικὴ δραστηριότητά του. Τὴν ἴδια αὐτὴ χρονιά ἡ βασίλισσα τοῦ δίνει τίτλο εὐγενείας.

Ὅλα αὐτὰ όμως δὲν ἀποτελοῦν παρὰ τὴν περίμετρο αὐτῆς τῆς σπινθηροβόλου προσωπικότητος, τὸ πολύχρωμο περίδημά της. Ἄς ρίξουμε μὲ τελευταία ματιὰ καὶ στὸ βάθος.

Ὅποιος γνωρίζει κάπως τίς βρεταννικὲς πραγματικότητες θὰ παραδεχθῇ ὅτι χρειάζεται ἀρκετὸ θάρρος σ' ἕναν ἄνθρωπο τῆς σειρᾶς του καὶ τῆς φήμης του γιὰ νὰ ζῇ τόσο ἔντονα, καὶ τόσο φανερά, μὲ τὰ λόγια καὶ ἰδίως μὲ τὰ ἔργα, τίς θρησκευτικὲς του πεποιθήσεις, ὅπως ζῇ ὁ Κόμπτον Μακκένζυ. Κανένας δισταγμὸς, κανένας ὑπολογισμὸς καμμιὰ ἀνθρωπαρέσκεια στὸ χριστιανισμό του. Ἡ θρησκεία, εἶπε γι' αὐτὸν ἡ γυναίκα του, εἶναι ὅ,τι πιὸ κεφαλαιώδες ὑπάρχει στὴ ζωὴ του. Καὶ ἴσως τοῦτο, πού ἀποτελεῖ τὴν οὐσία τῆς προσωπικότητός του, νὰ ἐξηγῇ καὶ τὴν ἀκτινοβολία του στὴν Ἀγγλία καὶ ἄλλοι.

Ἐκεῖνο πού τὸν ξεχωρίζει ἀπὸ ἄλλους διαστίμους χριστιανούς συγγραφεῖς εἶναι ἡ αἰσθησις τῆς χαρᾶς καὶ τοῦ χιοῦμορ, πού τὴν ἔχει πολὺ ἀνεπτυγμένη. Κι' αὐτὸ γίνεται ἐμφανὲς ὅταν παραλληλίζουμε αἰφνῆς, τὸ ὕψος τῆς τριλογίας του «Τὰ σκαλοπάτια τοῦ βωμοῦ», μὲ τὴν αὐτοαπολογητικὴ διήγησι ἐνὸς ἄλλου

ἐπιφανοῦς Ἑλλήνου μεταστραμιμένου, τοῦ Τσέστερτον, «Ἡ σφαῖρα καὶ ὁ σταυρός». Γιὰ τὸν Μακκένζυ ἡ θρησκεία εἶναι «ἡ χώρα τῆς χαρᾶς καὶ τοῦ χαμογέλιου». Τὸ χαμόγελο τῶν ἀγίων, οἱ ἐννέα μακαρισμοί, οἱ ἄνθρωποι ποὺ γνωρίζουν ὅτι ὁ Θεὸς εἶναι Πατέρας τους καὶ ζοῦν τὸ χαρούμενο μήνυμα τοῦ Εὐαγγελίου... Ἡ χαρὰ εἶναι μιὰ κατὰκτησις τοῦ χριστιανισμοῦ. Ἕνας ἐγωῖστῆς δὲ νοιῶται χαρὰ καὶ δὲν ἔχει τὴν αἰσθησι τοῦ χιοῦμορ. Ἀμέσως θυμώνει. Κι' ἀκριβῶς αὐτὴ ἡ χαρὰ, αὐτὴ ἡ αἰσθησις τοῦ χιοῦμορ, ἐπιτρέπει στὸ Μακκένζυ νὰ λέγῃ τὰ πιὸ ἀκανθώδη πράγματα μετὸν πιὸ ἐλκυστικὸ καὶ παραδεκτὸ τρόπο.

Ἵπάρχει ἓνα εἶδος χαρᾶς ποὺ φαίνεται ὅτι ἦταν ἄγνωστο πρὶν τὸ χριστιανισμό. Εἶναι ἡ τέχνη νὰ χαμογελᾷς στὴ ζωὴ, ἀκόμη καὶ ὅταν ἔχῃ πάψει νὰ σοῦ χαμογελάῃ. Εἶναι ἡ τέχνη νὰ μὴν παίρνης τραγικὰ τίποτε ἀπὸ τὰ γήινα ἐνδεχόμενα, ἀλλὰ ἀπλῶς νὰ τὰ παίρνης ὅλα στὰ σοβαρά. Σὲ τελευταία ἀνάλυσι ἡ χαρὰ εἶναι ἓνα γεγονὸς συνέσεως καὶ αὐστηρᾶς προσχωρήσεως στὴν ἀποκεκαλυμμένη τάξι τοῦ κόσμου, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀγάπης ἐπίσης καὶ κατανοήσεως, δηλαδὴ συμπάθειας. Κι' αὐτὸ τῆς δίνει γοητεία. Γιατὶ ὅποιος συμπάθει ἐλκύει τὴ συμπάθεια.

Εἶναι παράξενη ἡ διαπίστωσις ὅτι μονάχα ἐκαῖνοι ποὺ ἔχουν πολὺ ὑποφέρει φθάνουν στὴν ἀγνὴ χαρὰ. Ἴσως γιὰτὶ πρέπει νὰ ἔχῃς ὑποφέρει γιὰ νὰ ἔχῃς ἀληθινὴ καλωσύνη στὴν καρδιά σου.

Ἡ χαρὰ εἶναι ἡ γλυκύτης ἐνὸς χαμογέλιου σφραγισμένου ἀπὸ κατανόησι καὶ καλωσύνη. Καμμιὰ φορὰ κι ἀπὸ ἐλαφρὰ θλίψι. Ποτὲ ὅμως ἀπὸ πικρία. Ἡ ἀγνότης τῆς χαρᾶς, συμπεραίνει ὁ Κόμπτον Μακκένζυ, εἴσχεται στὶς τρεῖς θεολογικὰς ἀρετὰς: τὴν Πίστι, τὴν Ἑλπίδα καὶ τὴν Ἀγάπη...

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

CHAPTER I

THE BRITISH LEGATION

THE British Legation in Athens completely fulfilled my notion of what a Legation should look like. I can imagine no residence more eloquent of its vocation. To turn aside from the garish whiteness of Stadium Street and pull up in the carriage before that mellow house overlooking a large garden shady with dark pines and the feathery light green foliage of false-pepper trees was an experience of which the sharpest savour could only have been tasted after such weeks as my young companion Simpson had spent in his torpedo-boat or I among the tents of Kephalo.

Lovers of the South will agree with me that among the enchantments of tranquillity few exceed in their potency the exquisite peace of a sunny city by-street with a shady side to it about ten o'clock of a radiant summer morning. As richly as the perfume of apricots gathered in boyhood there returns upon my senses as I write these words the smell of the warm stone mingled with an aromatic breath of pines, with acrid whiffs of dust, and the sweaty leather of the horses' harness. Smith, the Legation porter, hurries down the wide steps from the great front door to help with the bags. He is a nutbrown little man, as brisk and dapper as a squirrel; but though he has lived for years in Athens, though he speaks the language fluently and is married to a Greek wife, he has lost none of his intense Englishness and might indeed be a college porter directing freshmen to their

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

rooms. Potts leads the way in, carrying the two largest bags as if they were a mere ounce of sweets. Sells* follows, and I see him now in his white uniform with the golden aiguillettes of a Naval Attaché. I hear him too exclaim upon the heat as he unhooks his collar, and declare that he must get his hair cut at once. And then the big entrance hall of the Legation fills with numerous figures in leisurely light suits of well cut clothes, who have emerged from various doors and seem to be flitting like butterflies round the canvas bags which have been flung down in a heap on the marble floor. I look beyond to where a wide marble staircase sweeps up to the cool intimacy of a seemingly undisturbed civilization above. The magic of ordinary life after those thirteen weeks of active service becomes overwhelmingly alluring, and though, as I tell Simpson, I am feeling like death, I vow to him I will not consult a doctor until I have first seen Athens.

It was at this moment that Rendel† came along kindly to put Simpson and myself at our ease.

"Who wants a doctor?"

"Mackenzie's pretty rocky," he was told.

I insisted that I was much better; but Rendel was firm, and announced his intention of telephoning immediately to his own medical man, Dr. Aravantinos, to give me an appointment.

"To-morrow will do," I insisted a little ungraciously.

"To-morrow is Sunday," Rendel reminded me. "You'd better see him to-day, and then you can lie up to-morrow if necessary."

"Yes, but I may have to go back in the *Imogen* to Imbros to-morrow," I argued. "There's really nothing the matter with me. I'm already feeling much better after the voyage."

* Rear-Admiral W. F. Sells, C.M.G., R.N.

† G. W. Rendel.

THE BRITISH LEGATION

I was as nervous of seeing a doctor as a child on the morning of his birthday party. And then as ill luck would have it I had to ask Rendel the way to a certain place. My doom was sealed. When I came back into the hall he had made the appointment.

"Dr. Aravantinos. 7 Odos Soutsou. He'll see you at eleven."

Rendel had not so long been down from Oxford, and his voice was still contending with the fogs of Isis and Cherwell even in this crystalline air of Greece. He was at this date an Attaché, though he was about to be promoted to Third Secretary. He was at this date an extremely serious, not to say solemn young man who delighted in being helpfully instructive. I was of course only too glad to be instructed, and in the alarming correctness of this new world as ready as a chicken to shelter beneath his wing. And even now, when he is a First Secretary at the Foreign Office, he has preserved most enviably much of that pristine solemnity of youth.

Some of Rendel's colleagues found his seriousness pompous, his affairé manner deedy, and his conscientious enthusiasm priggish. They were bored by his habit of tidying up their ideas at every opportunity, of taking down their opinions and dusting them carefully with the white silk handkerchief of a blameless life. They failed to apprehend what a mantilla of grave romance Rendel had flung over his profession. He would have been dreaming of diplomacy when he was still a boy at Downside, and when he found himself with state secrets in his own keeping he would have been as much awed as we may imagine Lord Curzon was sometimes awed by himself. For my part I rejoice to find a diplomat with so much respect for his own status. I had an ambition once to be a diplomat myself. I used to contemplate spending vacations in Touraine and Hanover to acquire the right accents of France and Ger-

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

many, and I saw myself at the end of a long career, floating like a kite above the workaday world with a tail of secret treaties and an inscrutable expression on my mask-like countenance. I wish I could have had as much fun out of being a novelist, as much as Henry James for instance got out of just being a novelist. No, fun is not the word. Does self-symbolization express with a clumsy compound what I mean ?

Erskine* was the next member of the Legation to whom we were introduced. He was the Counsellor, a smallish, finely made man of round about forty, with an air of polite weariness of the war as if it were a woman who would insist on talking too loudly and insistently to him at a dinner-party. He gave the impression that he had grown tired of seeing people like Simpson and myself who, stained with active service, arrived at the Legation and expected entertainment as their right ; but on his way back toward the Chancery just when his grey-lined creamy flannel suit had almost melted into the dim coolness of the corridor he stopped and called back over his shoulder an invitation to come and have a talk with him in his room sometime. And so fresh in my memory is the picture of that first visit to the Legation that I can see now the way his face caught the light from the open door and the half-shy, half-quizzical smile on his face which seemed at once an acknowledgment of myself and a comment upon the situation. A dozen pieces of good advice appeared to be simmering upon Rendel's lips, and it suddenly struck me that Erskine was bored by his junior's pastoral enthusiasm and that perhaps some of his apparent boredom with Simpson and myself had been a prophylactic boredom, a kind of cooling dose in fact.

Hicks-Beach,† one of the two First Secretaries, had by

* The Hon. Sir William Erskine, K.C.M.G., M.V.O., H.B.M.'s Minister to Poland.

† Ellice Hicks-Beach.

now crept into the conversation. He was looking up at Simpson and myself with an expression of shocked compassion and saying in a voice that sounded ridiculously gentle for the bloodcurdling text :

"We are making a great mistake by wasting our resources in attacking Constantinople. We must kill Germans. That is the only way to win this war. We must kill Germans. And more Germans. And still more Germans."

After this he wandered off toward the Chancery, apparently bowing courteously to people he might be bumping into through being short-sighted, and muttering to himself as he went :

"The only way. Kill Germans. We must kill lots more Germans. We must think of nothing but killing Germans. We want to go on killing Germans."

Before Simpson and I had had time to exchange a smile at such ferocity of opinion wedded to so tender a courtliness of manner Goodhart* came twittering up.

This First Secretary looked like an aquatint in an edition de luxe of one of Paul Bourget's novels. I had never encountered such perfection of grooming outside the fancy of French illustrators. One would have expected this pink and white mould of fashion, this already slightly, but very slightly, convex glass of form to speak lackadaisically in the way so many of our poor dandies have been made to talk for us in books and on the stage. But Goodhart was the agreeable rattle. He talked incessantly in a series of jerky sentences divided each from the next by a ha-ha fence, and all the time he was talking he suggested more positively the operation of preening than any human being I had met. Rendel looked at him as sourly as a Roundhead.

"Beach wanting to kill more Germans? Ha-ha! I'm getting up another bathing party at Raphina for the next full moon. Such a success last month. I was moved. I

* Heron Goodhart.

don't mind telling you I had tears in my eyes. Ha-ha ! And the water was marvellously warm. I suppose you won't come, Rendel ? ”

“ Thanks,” said Rendel with a gulp of indignation. “ I'm rather too tired after a day in the Chancery to go bathing. We can't all amuse ourselves all the time.”

I did not realize, such an efflorescence of eternal youth blossomed in his cheeks, that Goodhart was so much Rendel's senior. It was only when I heard of their comparative ranks in the service that I realized how deeply Goodhart must have shocked Rendel's sense of the appropriate to put such censorious contempt into his tones. But Goodhart was oblivious of Rendel's intolerance. He was indeed as good-natured as his name and the sharpest criticism he allowed himself to utter in my hearing of Rendel was to wish that he would brush his hair more carefully.

“ After all,” he twittered, “ the Chancery is not a studio. Ha-ha ! ”

Now to Rendel's proclamation of the strenuous life he burred :

“ I must amuse myself. I require it. Ha-ha ! ”

And then he began to flash his nails in the rich light that was streaming through the open door from the sunny street. He eyed them as affectionately as if they were diamonds. His white fingers were continuously and restlessly *en pos* like coryphées pirouetting in the wings before they make an entrance. And when they were not pirouetting they were brushing up that fair moustache, which in spite of the war was still ideally Teutonic and which he tended as carefully as a border of mignonette. Goodhart's preoccupation with his hands, when there were bags to be opened and sorted, way-bills to be checked, telegrams to be enciphered, and perhaps a word of advice to be given to the Minister was too much for Rendel, who was ploughing a straight furrow

through life and had no time like Burns to sentimentalize over this 'crimson-tipped flow'r' in his path. If Rendel had been an ambassador instead of an attaché he would have crushed without mercy the slender stem of Goodhart's diplomatic career.

"Well, if you've nothing to do, Goodhart, I'm afraid I have."

It was with something not unlike a snort that Rendel vanished from the idle scene. But before he went he said to me seriously :

"You won't be late going to Aravantinos, will you ? Because I've asked him to stay in on purpose to see you."

Goodhart was still burbling on. Simpson and I caught each other's eyes, and we both had to look up at the ceiling and smile idiotically in order to afford a faint relief to the inward laughter tormenting us.

"It was too wonderful at Raphina. Mariette was there. She confessed she had a *béguin* for me, and she is much more intelligent than the average cabaret girl. She reads. Oh, yes ! She reads. . . ."

And as he twittered on, flitting from the tale of one *béguin* after another as lightly and inconsequently it seemed as a chaffinch from twig to twig, Simpson and I warmed toward him. We warmed toward his exquisite foolishness as to a character in a book by P. G. Wodehouse. We enjoyed him as audiences have enjoyed Charles Hawtrey or Cyril Maude or G. P. Huntly. He became for us an incarnation of folly itself. He seemed like carnival before we returned to the wind and shells and dust and flies of the Peninsula.

"I suppose you two will be at the Panhellenion to-night ?" he asked.

Simpson looked nervous. He cast, as he himself would have put it, a horny eye upon Goodhart's suggestion. He only had to-night, and he did not want to waste it upon

classical antiquities. Modern Youth was his quest before he found himself once more cribbed, cabined, and confined in a torpedo-boat.

"The Panhellenion?" he repeated doubtfully. "Is that a temple or something? That might be rather bloodsome."

"Ha-ha! The Panhellenion a temple! How delicious! Ha-ha! Mariette will appreciate that. She has brains. She is not beautiful. She is really almost ugly. But she has *chic* and brains. Yes, she will be amused to hear you thought the Panhellenion was a temple. No, no, it's the café where we all meet. *Enfin, on s'amuse, que voulez-vous?* I must run now and see if there are any telegrams for me. We're worked to death here. Ha-ha! Still, I'm thinner. I've lost a pound and a half in a month."

And as he twittered off to the Chancery Simpson whispered in my ear that he seemed rather an extraordinary bird. But we had no time to discuss Goodhart, for at that moment the Minister* himself, papers in hand, came hurrying down the marble staircase. I looked with interest at the man whose signature I had read at the bottom of so many telegrams during those weeks at G.H.Q. I saw that he was spare and taut as a wire rope, that his profile was sharply cut, that his nose was even thinner and perhaps longer than my own, and that he was as grey as Oxford. My first impression of him recalled the Head of a College. No doubt that crowded and heightened experience where most of my seniors had been so unsuggestive of Oxford made Sir Francis Elliot appear academic in contrast to them. And he had that peculiar Oxford shyness in the way he spoke to us two younger men. There was not the faintest sign that he was bored as he so easily might have been by having to be hospitable. I remembered Sir Ian Hamilton had told me that he would probably invite me to stay with him at

* Sir Francis Elliot, G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O.

THE BRITISH LEGATION

Cephissia ; but it had not struck me until this moment that there was no earthly reason why he should. Let this brief glance of Sir Francis be enough for now. Writing as I am of my first sight of somebody whom I grew to know very well, to admire greatly, and to love much, I am feeling the weight of the pages ahead and dread the stilts of self-consciousness. The ink runs thick at such moments. No matter. Sir Francis himself was in such a hurry this morning to get at the bags that he had no time to do more than invite Simpson and myself to dine with him at Cephissia before he was hurrying away to the Chancery. And perhaps a picture of him hurrying along the corridor, papers in hand, toward the Chancery will serve to introduce him as typically as any, for I cannot remember the arrival or departure of any bag in which Sir Francis did not take an intensely personal interest. He was like a boy with a large parcel addressed to himself.

Simpson and I were to put up at the Hotel d'Angleterre ; but we agreed to meet for lunch at the Grande Bretagne. After seeing the doctor I should have to call upon the mysterious V and deliver some letters and messages from Deedes.* I had for mufti only the blue flannel coat in which I had arrived in Alexandria, and it was a hot garment for Athens in this grilling August sun.

Dr. Aristides Aravantinos was as benign as Asclepius the first physician, his demigod, of whom and of his rites in Epidaurus he had written a charming book. I have just taken it down from my shelves and read the kind inscription from the author to his patient of 1915. Already the ink is somewhat faded, but not the memory of the doctor's kindness and care, for which let me add he charged what was really nothing more than a nominal fee.

I still have his account and find that in less than two months he was called upon to visit me forty-one times

* Brig.-Gen. Sir Wyndham Deedes, C.M.G., D.S.O.

and write a report on the state of my health into the bargain.

I explained that morning how anxious I was to avoid a clinic if possible, and finding that I had no fever Dr. Aravantinos agreed to try the effect of two or three days' fresh air with plenty of motoring, provided—and I can see the paternal expression now on that kindly face with its trim pointed white beard—provided I would promise to take a dose of castor oil to-morrow morning and lie up for at any rate one whole day. The trouble was the combination of the dysentery with the cystitis. One malady's meat was the other malady's poison. Still, he would try the effect of some diuretic; but if after two or three days I was no better, why then I should have to go into the clinic. I left the doctor to go and call upon V, feeling that at any rate to-day was my own and determined by the grace of my ills to enjoy every moment of it.

When war broke out V had been one of our Military Consuls in the Levant and after some good intelligence work in France he had been sent out to Athens in February, 1915, to launch a bureau for obtaining military intelligence about the Turks. His first headquarters had been in a small house in St. Dionyse Square, but since May the office had been at 20 Academy Street. V's apparent business in Athens was the administration of a fund for the relief of the refugees from Turkey and Asia Minor. This was the best camouflage that could have been devised, because it enabled intermediaries and even agents, to visit the premises in Academy Street without being conspicuous. And it gave V under his own name and rank a plausible reason for being in Athens.

We all know the feelings that are attributed to some preposterous figure in a detective tale who is on the verge of solving the mystery of some other personage which has been eluding him and us for the stock three hundred pages.

THE BRITISH LEGATION

These feelings were mine that August morning when I reached the house in Academy Street and saw a queue of dejected refugees in all kinds of miserable rags, trailing out along the pavement from the door of the office. I may add that my participation in such conventional feelings is the only contact with reality I have managed to achieve in the few detective tales I have read since the war. Experience may teach us much, but while it teaches it robs us of our illusions. I am now dependent for my sensational reading on Deadwood Dick stories of the Wild West, and I shall not thank the man who robs me of my childish belief in cowboys.

On inquiry at the office of the Refugee Commission I was directed upstairs and found myself in a large room where several people were busy with papers, and typewriters were clicking. Edmonds,* quiet, grave, efficient, and supremely discreet, penetrated the sanctum, which was a smaller room opening out of the large front room. A moment later I was in the presence of V himself. The door between the two rooms closed gently. V rose from his table and welcomed me with that courtly grace and charm of manner which sometimes reminded me of a French marquis and sometimes of a high grade mandarin. He was a shortish man, very neatly dressed, with a round fresh face, a trim moustache, and a pair of the largest tortoiseshell-rimmed spectacles I had seen at that date. Indeed, I am not sure that even in the owl-eyed world we know to-day I have seen any quite so large. My first business was to give him the letter from Deedes with various enclosures.

"Will you excuse me?" he begged with genial ceremoniousness.

I sat down while he dealt with the missive, and thought how appropriate it was that V's window should look out on

* Consul-General W. S. Edmonds, C.M.G., O.B.E.

a blank wall. The viewless pane added still something to the effect of those immense spectacles. V cut the envelope very carefully with a metal letter-opener. Then having spread the contents before him he leaned over his table and with slowly nodding head mastered what Deedes had to tell him.

Presently he looked up and, his wide-open eyes magnified by the glasses and swimming with dreadful secrets, gazed at me.

"Nobody saw you carrying this letter?" he inquired in hushed accents.

"I don't think so. It was in my lining pocket."

I pulled aside my coat to show him the shooting-pockets.

"And they button," V observed in a tone of epicurean satisfaction. "That is just the pocket you want for this kind of work."

I realized that these pockets, which I used entirely for the sake of the coat's cut and the convenience of them, not at all for security, were the best testimonial I could have produced.

V groped for a large pipe and lit it.

"We cannot be too careful in *our* work," he murmured solemnly through a cloud of smoke. "Three weeks ago," he went on, eyeing me with some apprehension for the effect of the shock he was going to administer, "three weeks ago Keeling actually came round here in uniform. I sent a personal telegram to Deedes about it."

I remembered that telegram and I remembered the way Eddie Keeling had said:

"I really think V rather exaggerates all this secrecy business."

But what Eddie Keeling thought in the Intelligence tent at Kephala and what I felt bound to think under the direct gaze of V himself were far apart.

"It was dangerous?" I suggested.

THE BRITISH LEGATION

"It might have compromised the whole Organization," V declared tremendously. "I chose this house with great care. It is almost opposite the headquarters of the Greek General Staff. You see the idea of that, of course?"

"Absolutely," I affirmed, but only able to think of putting one's head in the lion's mouth, which somehow seemed the wrong metaphor to illustrate V's notion.

"The last place you would expect to find an organization like this if it were anything but what it appears to be. The British Commission for the Relief of Refugees. Why fear the neighbourhood of the Greek General Staff? Let them look out of their windows at us. What have we to be ashamed of?"

Then begging me to excuse him he turned back to Deedes's letter. When he had absorbed that part of it dealing with A work or information about the enemy, he called for Edmonds and handed him the inquiries to be worked over in the other room with maps and files of agents' reports. This temporarily off his mind, he gave all his attention to my account of the difficulty we had had at G.H.Q. in getting any evidence from Athens against the alleged spies denounced from there. V agreed that the contre-espionage information had left much to be desired.

"For some time we had to depend on what B could do in his spare time with W to help him whenever he could. Now C has sent me out a special man for the job, who works at that side of the business. But I do not feel quite satisfied with the stuff he is sending in. I have handed over B to him, for as much as he can be spared; but I cannot do without B entirely, because after all the real work of this organization is to find out what the enemy is doing. Contre-espionage in a neutral country is always unsatisfactory. C will never allow much money for it."

V? B? W? C? I was growing confused by this throng of initials.

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

"You'd better have a talk with L about it, my dear fellow," V went on.

"L?"

"That's the man who's doing the C.E. side of our activities. Liebig we call him. I should like to know what you think about him. I shall value your opinion—between ourselves of course. After you've seen Liebig we'll talk over the whole question of contre-espionage again," V concluded.

And then since it was time for me to be meeting Simpson at the Grande Bretagne that first talk came to an end. I can still see V, as he insists on almost bowing me out, before he goes back to shake his head over the problem of how a Turkish regiment which, though last reported near Smyrna, is already engaged with our left at Suvla. I can still remember with a warmth of pleasure the grand manner of V's courteous adieux. And in writing that last sentence there suddenly occurs to me a remark with which V once greeted me when I entered his room :

"I was thinking this morning, my dear fellow, that the greatest asset a man can have is personal charm."

He said it so solemnly, with so much the air of one who has discovered the philosopher's stone, and so readily, alas, do we, or at any rate so readily do I accept a compliment, that at the time I assumed he was alluding to my own manner. But now fifteen years later I ask myself if he may not have been meaning his own, and if the studied and elaborate courtliness of those greetings and the ceremoniousness of those farewells may not have been a deliberate cultivation of that personal charm whose worldly value he reckoned so high. Yet V himself had no need to worry about it, for he was a most lovable man. Among the best evenings I ever spent, I look back on a dinner I had with him when both our initials were forgotten (for let it not be supposed that I was going to be without mine in that

secret alphabet) and when at the Pantheon Restaurant he ordered favourite Turkish dishes and we talked about nothing but life's amenities, of shooting and fishing, of the nightingales and roses of old Turkey, and of the world before the war. It was an Arabian Night repast, and I could fancy that we sat cross-legged in an air cooled by fountains instead of in that garish Athenian café.

But this is to anticipate another wonderful hour of eating when Simpson and I lunched that fourteenth of August in the tempered light of the Grande Bretagne Hotel's dining-room. We felt not very well-dressed for such splendour, and so we took the first table on the left, which seemed to provide the most obscure corner. Nor did we dare speak at first above a whisper, for the contrast with every meal we had eaten for weeks was the contrast of a cathedral in the quiet of a week-day noon with a whelk-stall in Ratcliff Highway. We saw Goodhart come in with two fashionable women and a fashionable young man. We saw millionaires with pointed beards, and the wives of millionaires all pearls and rice-powder. We saw various members of the diplomatic corps, and aiguilleted A.D.Cs. The low murmur of polite conversation for rifle-fire, the faint occasional tinkle of a glass for the havoc of a heavy sea, the swish of a silk skirt for a shell passing overhead, and the genteel pop of a cork for the detonating crash from an eight-inch gun fired from the other side of the Straits. No wonder we talked in whispers. I can still remember the taste of the light clear soup and the eggs en cocotte and the chicken sauté and the veal cutlet. Oh, it was nothing for Lucullus, our lunch, but to us it was of a savour! The prudent friend who had ventured to suggest I should content myself with a little boiled rice and a glass of Vichy that day would have run the risk of being hit over the head with the bottle of Dekeleia wine we were drinking. I do not believe that, if a skeleton Death had drawn near and tapped my shoulder to

bid me beware, I would have desisted from that banquet. I knew I should pay for every drop of that light white wine with agony as of fire consuming my inside. I knew I should pay for every fibre of that cutlet with . . . well, let it pass, I was ready to pay ; and Simpson had the tact not to intrude upon such wilful imprudence with good advice.

After lunch we hired a motor-car and drove to Tatoï. Even as the lunch was a lunch of lunches this was a drive of drives, and that in spite of my having to leave the car every few miles. Tatoï was the summer residence of the King, a demesne of oaks and pines, with a wide well-metalled road running through it, and upon it the hush of landed property. Wherever we stopped it was easy to fancy that we could hear an old cock pheasant calling or the crackling of the twigs beneath a gamekeeper's dignified approach. We found an inn at the end of an avenue and sat outside at a table in the shade of big trees, possessors of this full-scented earthy afternoon, of this landscape rich with peace which we could fancy we had stolen from the salt fume of Helles and the wind-vexed hurly-burly of war. On our way back we got out of the car and stared for a quarter of an hour at an immensely wide landscape of such incomparable beauty that if Pallas Athene had bidden me look upon Medusa's head and be turned to stone I would not have repined, for though I should still be standing there I should still be marvelling. No wonder the Greeks never bothered to write about natural scenery, but thought only of how from marble they might hew shapes of men and gods worthy of their setting. No wonder that even the poetry of Euripides seemed vulgar in such a land by affronting it with recognizable figures of the humanity that dwelt therein. Mountains, sea, and Attic plain were spread before us in an atmosphere so crystalline and so jealous of perfect form that when I first came back to Southern Italy from Greece I was amazed at the softness of a blue sky I had

THE BRITISH LEGATION

once considered fervid, at the milkiness of an air I had once fancied clear. I linger again with that prospect before me, loath to turn from it until I have captured the essence of it in words. Just as Simpson and I were getting back into the car there came round a bend in the road an obviously English nurse with a perambulator and children. Our chauffeur saluted, and we realized that these were the Royal children. So we too saluted, and as we turned the corner of the bosky road we looked back and saw that they were waving us on our way.

When we left behind the slopes of the Parnes and reached the dusty populous road leading out of Athens I began to feel that the effort I had made was likely to be too much for me, and by the time we were back at the Hotel d'Angleterre my knees were so groggy that I felt I must lie down. The prospect of going out to dine at Cephissia with the Minister was impossible to face. I asked Simpson to make my apologies, but promised that if I recovered later I would join him at the Panhellenion.

My room at the Angleterre was a small one looking down into a narrow side street out of Hermes Street, the Bond Street of Athens; but it was high up, and from the window I could see against the sky the Acropolis over a huddle of brown-tiled roofs. Suddenly, while I was lying on my bed in considerable pain the room was filled with an unearthly rosy light, and the white houses opposite were stained as if by fire. I jumped from the bed.

"The violet crown! 'Ιοστέφανοι 'Αθῆναι! Violet-crowned Athens!"

All my life I had taken the epithet for granted. Had it not been useless for iambs I should without doubt have used it at school if not for a city certainly for some goddess. However, as I never reached the status of writing anapaestics, my masters were spared the stock epithet that made Aristophanes sneer at the deputations from other cities

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

who used it when they wished to flatter the Athenians into some concession. But when the triteness of an epithet is due to its perfection, and when the perfection of it is revealed to the eye for the first time, that is an experience which kindles like poetic fire. Assuredly it burnt me so fiercely that my own poor little bonfire of pain was forgotten, and I think that never once did I watch without wonder that violet light immediately after sunset which irradiates Hymettus, irradiates for a few minutes roofs and columns and the faces of human beings, and then in a moment surrenders to the greyness of the swift dusk. Beholding this miracle of lovely colour for the first time, I became suddenly seized with a fear that I was going to be so ill that perhaps I might die without having stood before the Parthenon. I determined to drive up at once to the Acropolis in this radiance of rosy-violet; but when I reached the door of the hotel, the light had faded and I returned in the lift to my room where presently I fell asleep, only to be woken by some of those minute bugs of whose ferocity I had had a taste at Mytilene last month. However, with the help of electric light I discouraged them and slept on till about eight o'clock when I heard the brazen voice of Captain Potts of the *Imogen* summon me from sleep to go and dine with him. In my small bedroom he looked huge. But I was feeling better after my rest and taking his arm, which was like holding on to the bough of a tree, I walked downstairs.

I met a lot more people that evening, but they must wait their turn for some less confusing occasion than a crowded Athenian café, and indeed I remember most vividly my first experience with the irrepressible little Athenian *loustroi* or shoeblacks. Carrying their equipment as the camel its hump, they insinuate themselves underneath the table at which one is eating or drinking and seize any unoccupied foot as a dog might seize a dropped bone.

Before the owner has time to protest the polish is dabbed on and the brushing begins. The ingenuity of the proceeding is that the polish is so sticky that with the dust of Athens the boots require cleaning again an hour later. When these *loustroi* grow too big to crawl under café tables they emigrate to America where, fortune favouring them, they acquire shoe-shine parlours of their own in which they polish the boots of the American citizen with the same sticky mixture and so compel him to have them re-polished every two or three hours. I always attributed the heavily padded toecaps which Americans formerly affected to the strain upon the extremities caused by the repeated brushing they had to undergo to keep their boots untarnished. Not having learnt yet how to drive away these pertinacious little creatures with the right objurgations in Greek, I probably had my boots polished quite half a dozen times that first evening.

Simpson turned up from dinner with the Minister about midnight when the café was beginning to fill up. With the prospect of being confined to his torpedo-boat for weeks to come he was anxious to outvie even the Athenians in turning night into day. Goodhart had introduced him to Mariette who was slim and dark, and somebody else had introduced me to a Roumanian who was large and fair, and the Roumanian had introduced to the party one of those anonymous friends who lean back from the general conversation and yawn gently to themselves, but who somehow are the last to leave. A drive to Old Phaleron was suggested, and Simpson, thinking of his torpedo-boat and I of my castor-oil in the near future, we clung together like two condemned criminals to our last night. We decided a drive to Old Phaleron would be a capital end to this long day robbed from admirals and doctors. However, when the car was fetched, everybody else, after declaring that it was a most delicious experience to visit the hotel and eat supper

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

by the edge of the sea, backed out of the expedition on the plea of to-morrow's hard work. So in the end Simpson and I took Mariette, the large Roumanian, and the languid anonymous friend. It must have been two o'clock by now, and when we reached Old Phaleron we tried to think that it really was a delicious experience to sup in the marine pavilion, which was a large jetty through the planked floor of which the sea glimmered oilily. There was a roof; but the sides were open to the bay, and the table-cloths and napkins were sodden with sea-damp. The moon had set hours ago. It became more and more tiring to talk French. The only compensation for me was that I felt too ill to drink the sweet champagne and looked too ill to give any offence thereby. I suppose it was about half-past three or four o'clock when we gave up pretending that this damp jetty was as *ravissant* as Mariette insisted on declaring that it was. Yet this jetty was to take its place in history, for it was from here that M. Venizelos and Admiral Coundouriotis embarked on the night of the twenty-fifth of September, 1916, and from here that they sailed to proclaim the Provisional Government in Crete.

When we reached the waiting car, the gimcrack summer villas of Old Phaleron were emerging like ghosts from the smoky blue of dawn. It was a deceptive twilight though, and the chauffeur, starting his car at full speed in the Mediterranean chauffeur's way, misjudged the distance of a country-cart which had swerved across the road in front of him, ran right into it, and tilted the four occupants head over heels into the dust. The Roumanian blonde shrieked that we were all dead. The anonymous friend scrambled out over the back of the car, and, lifting her skirts as if against the onslaught of a thousand rats, stood screaming in the road. Mariette with the practical wisdom of the Frenchwoman in an accident, should she be successful in avoiding hysterics, stood on the seat of the car and

harangued two policemen who had apparently been woken from sleep in a front garden, for they appeared like conjured spectres from the ground itself. The chauffeur wept and appealed to Simpson and myself not to abandon him. As for the four peasants, two men and two women who had been driving in the cart, their united noise was beyond the English language ; it would take the genius of Aristophanes for onomatopoeics to express it. So far as we could ascertain, the peasants were only slightly bruised and scratched; but, as they had been rolling about in hundreds of upset tomatoes, they looked as if they had been cut to pieces. The most sensible creature was the horse who was placidly eating some of the spilt greenstuff intended for the market. The shafts of the cart were broken ; but otherwise it did not seem much damaged.

The decision of the police was that we must all go to the police-station in New Phaleron and make our depositions to the head man there. How far away was that ? It was just round the bay. Well, we would drive there in the car. Not at all. The car was under arrest, and nobody except the chauffeur could be allowed to drive in it. Why ? Shrugs of shoulders. Apparently the law of Greece was that, when a chauffeur was arrested for driving a car to the common danger, the car was presumed to share his guilt and must be taken to the police-station there to explain its behaviour. So off it started round the bay with the two policemen standing on the footboard. Even they could not get inside and sit back like passengers. Such was the law. There is no doubt that the cart would have been arrested and taken to the police-station too, if there had been enough string to splice the shafts ; but it had to be left under the guard of another policeman who had materialized and the horse was arrested instead, to be led along by still another policeman and explain itself in New Phaleron.

How the victims of the accident reached the police-station

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

was never found out. I do not believe that any place has ever seemed so far away as that police-station at New Phaleron came to seem that morning. As the sky grew lighter and lighter the bay grew larger and larger. What annoyed Simpson particularly was that in a few hours he would have to come back to Phaleron Bay from Athens in order to go aboard the *Imogen*. I have just looked up what Baedeker has to say about the distance between the two Phalerons. He declares that from Old Phaleron New Phaleron can be reached on foot along the coast in three-quarters of an hour. Can it? Not by a naval lieutenant and a synthetic marine trailing three *diseuses* behind them through the rosy-fingered dawn after a motor smash. It was past six o'clock when we reached the police-station of New Phaleron; and when we did reach it it was locked. Through the medium of Mariette's Franco-Greek I asked one of the policemen who after all had been driven here, albeit standing on the footboard of the car, why he had not roused the head official, and we were told that he was now on his way to investigate our case. At last he arrived, one of those unshaven Mediterranean officials who seem to have been hatched in the dusty cracks of their own office floors like fleas. He went behind a counter and began his interrogation of the chauffeur, who took a long time with his evidence because after every statement he appealed to us to bear him out, and this meant a great deal of translating. Moreover, as usual, the Mediterranean ink was hiding in a corner of the Mediterranean inkpot and had to be coaxed out with the Mediterranean pen like a wrinkle out of its shell, after which the pen would trip up over a hair in the paper and the ink would escape through to the other side. When the chauffeur's evidence had been taken, our evidence was taken together of course with our family genealogies. It was half-past seven by the time that pen had scratched the last sentence; but when we proposed to drive back at

once to Athens, the official shook his head. To begin with, the car must remain in New Phaleron, and secondly we must wait until the victims arrived to give their evidence. At present their wounds were being attended to in a neighbouring pharmacy.

Half-an-hour dragged by, and then the victims arrived. First came the old peasant who had been driving. He entered with his foot in a sling, swathed in bandages, supported by a pair of crutches, and uttering terrible groans. He was followed by one of the females whose weather-beaten face was covered with crosses of sticking-plaster and who was evidently trying to groan appropriately, but who on account of some lack of vocal or stomachic control could only succeed in emitting a series of ungovernable sonorous belches. They were volcanic. Typhoeus himself groaning beneath the weight of Etna and making a noise, according to Hesiod, between the voice of the gods, the roaring of a lion, the bellowing of a bull, the howling of a dog, and the pipe of a whistle would have been shamed into quiescence by the stupendous eructations of that patched up and hideous female. The echo of them is still in my ears. The other two victims were bandaged and plastered to match their leaders and groaning not less lugubriously. The first thing they all did after limping into the office was simultaneously to thrust their eight hands with outspread fingers into the face of the chauffeur in the conventional gesture of Greek execration. And then their evidence was taken. As this had to be contradicted almost word by word it wasted another hour, and it was nine o'clock before we reached the station to take the steam-tram to Athens.

I was feeling so ill by now that I did not mind how much people stared at us on that Sabbath morn. I did not mind who or what they thought Mariette was or the Roumanian blonde or the anonymous friend, who or what they thought

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

Simpson and I were. I felt utterly indifferent to the fate of the chauffeur who had remained behind under close arrest. When we reached Athens, we put the *diseuses* into a carriage, dispatched them to whatever *pension d'artistes* they lived in, and drove back ourselves to the hotel. Simpson dashed upstairs to collect his things, and within twenty minutes he was on his way back to Phaleron to go on board the *Imogen*. The fortune of war did not bring us together again. As for me I took that dose of castor-oil and slept till lunch time.

CHAPTER II

DIPLOMACY

IT will be as well to diverge for a few pages from a personal narrative and try to recapitulate as fairly as possible the recent history of the Balkans which had created the position I found in Greece when I landed there in this month of August, 1915.

We may look back to September 6th, 1913, for a significant omen of the state of affairs which would develop in Athens during the years of the Great War, for that was the fatal day when King Constantine received at Potsdam from the Kaiser the baton of a German Field-Marshal, the Collar of the Black Eagle, and the Colonelcy of the 2nd Nassau Infantry Regiment. These military honours might not have achieved more prominence than the usual conventional compliment which one Sovereign pays to another, if King Constantine, when returning thanks, had not made that speech so widely circulated through the Press of Europe, in which he attributed the Greek victories during the late wars with Turkey and Bulgaria to the principles of warfare that he and his officers had learned from the Prussian General Staff. Considering that the Greek Army had been reorganized by a French military mission which his Prime Minister, M. Venizelos, had summoned to Greece, this was a tactless speech. But it was also vainglorious and untrue. Had it not been for Venizelos, King Constantine, then Crown Prince, would have turned aside at a critical moment in the campaign against the Turks to attack Monastir, and the Greeks would never have taken Salonica. As it was,

they only occupied the town for a few minutes before the arrival of the tired and dusty vanguard of the Bulgarian army. From the first Venizelos had pressed upon the General Staff the need to urge the Crown Prince forward. When after the victory of Sarandaporon he was hesitating, the inspired Cretan telegraphed to King George that the Crown Prince would be held responsible if Salonica were lost. His eldest son should have all the glory and redeem the ruin of his military reputation in 1897; but he must take Salonica.

The hatred which deepened in Constantine for Venizelos was in part the hatred of a debtor for the man who has put him under an obligation. The tooth of such hatred is sharp, and the existence of it must be grasped by those who wish to appreciate the political position in Greece during the Great War. It is the key to the situation.

Venizelos was so much perturbed by what might be the effect of the Potsdam eloquence that he returned from his rest-cure at Loutraki in order to give the French Chargé d'Affaires in Athens a solemn assurance that the royal words lacked political significance. A paragraph was inserted in the *Hestia*, the chief Government organ, to point out that the King had not been accompanied to Potsdam by a responsible Minister and that the foreign policy of Greece was unaffected by his utterance. It would be too much of an assumption to discover in that indiscreet speech of King Constantine a determination to help Germany during the war. A political bias may have existed. No doubt it did; but the real inspiration of his words was an ebullient complacency, for that baton had given him as much pleasure as a schoolboy gets from his cricket or football colours. I was told by one of his aides that entering a room unexpectedly he found the King dressed in his Field-Marshal's uniform and posing before a full-length mirror with the baton, like a debutante in her presentation frock

DIPLOMACY

I withhold my informant's name, but by the way he imitated his August Master's demeanour before that mirror I could feel sure he was not inventing a malicious tale. There was, moreover, as he told it, something delightfully human about the King's naïve pleasure in his grand new Prussian appearance. But he should not have made a speech about it. The French themselves are vain, and they never forgave him for his words.

During the first half of 1914 the fears, ambitions, and mutual jealousies of the Great Powers prevented any real settlement of the Balkans. There was always the danger of war breaking out again between Greece and Turkey, and as late as July Venizelos was on his way to meet the Grand Vizier in some northern city where they might in comparative coolness attempt to settle the outstanding problems between their two countries. By the time he had reached Munich there were graver problems before him. The Great War was about to begin.

The Greek Minister for Foreign Affairs at this date was Doctor Georges Streit, a grandson of one of those Bavarians who had come South in the train of King Otto. On July 29th he telegraphed to Venizelos an official intimation from Berlin that Germany would fight on the side of Austria should war follow the ultimatum to Serbia. Dr. Streit added they had been given to understand that Bulgaria and possibly even Turkey would take advantage of the situation to ally themselves with Germany. Thus it seemed desirable that Greece should disengage herself from her pact with Serbia as soon as possible, and that some arrangement should be reached by which Turkey and Greece pledged themselves to neutrality. What course did the President of the Council advise? On the following day Alexandropoulos, the Greek Minister at Belgrade, telegraphed at the instance of Pachich, the Serbian Premier, to find out what action Greece would take if Serbia were attacked by

Austria, and also if she were attacked by Bulgaria. It was certain that Montenegro would fight on her side, though this was of slight importance compared with the information that Russia had positively decided to support Serbia with force of arms. Venizelos replied from Munich that he must reserve his decision on the question of Greek help in an Austro-Serbian war, but that if Serbia were attacked by Bulgaria he should propose to King Constantine and the Government an immediate mobilization against Bulgaria in order to maintain the Treaty of Bucharest and to relieve Serbia from any anxiety about her right flank. To the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Athens he telegraphed in a similar strain.

Venizelos telegraphed further from Munich to Streit that he considered the Pact between Greece and Serbia did not compel her to fight actively on the side of Serbia against Austria, although it did demand the mobilization of 40,000 men. Notwithstanding, he thought it would be in the common interest that Greece should not mobilize immediately for fear of provoking a general mobilization in Bulgaria and thus possibly precipitating a very grave conflict which might still be avoided. Streit was to inform Alexandropoulos in Belgrade accordingly, but at the same time instruct him to assure the Serbian Government that in the event of a Bulgarian mobilization Greece would herself mobilize immediately. He was to point out too that the Greek attitude corresponded with the attitude the Serbian Government had adopted recently when confronted by the prospect of war between Greece and Turkey. He went on to urge that an understanding should be reached at once in order that Sofia might understand what was involved by any armed threat to Serbia. Then he pointed out the possibility of the war's becoming general and the need to decide at once upon the inclination of Greece in such an event. He expressed his firm opinion that in no circum-

stances whatsoever could Greece ally herself with the group of Powers opposed to Serbia. Such an alignment would imperil the vital interests of Greece, would violate the sanctity of treaties, and strike at the dignity of the State. And he finished this telegram by affirming that nothing would ever induce him to swerve in the slightest degree from such a policy.

So, on August 2nd Streit notified Belgrade that Greece would adopt toward Serbia an attitude of most benevolent neutrality and hold herself ready to repel any Bulgarian attack upon her ally. He stressed the point that active co-operation against Austria at this moment would do more harm than good, by exposing Salonica to attack and thus closing the only port through which Serbia could be re-victualled. A Cabinet Council was held under the presidency of the King, and this communication was repeated to all Greek Ministers abroad with a further proviso that, should Bulgaria intervene in the war, Greece would intervene in concert with Roumania. Austria accepted this statement of the Greek position and gave an undertaking not to help Bulgaria in the event of a Greco-Bulgarian war.

Meanwhile, on July 31st, the Kaiser had sent a strongly worded personal appeal to King Constantine to join up with Germany. Disregarding the general belief that the assassination of King George at Salonica had been instigated by Austria, he actually called upon Constantine to remember that his father had been murdered by the Serbs. Finally the Kaiser threatened him with a simultaneous attack by Italy, Bulgaria, and Turkey if Greece disappointed him by taking the other side, in which case he must not expect his brother-in-law to do anything to save him or his country. On August 2nd the King declared in response to this communication that the interests of Greece demanded absolute neutrality and the maintenance of the *status quo* in the Balkans established by the Treaty of Bucharest. He added

that Greece would act in concert with Roumania and prevent Bulgaria from trying to annex territory recently conquered by Serbia. Such an aggrandisement of Bulgaria could only end with Russia predominant in the Balkans. The Kaiser scribbled a number of uncomplimentary remarks about his brother-in-law's policy, in the margin of this telegram, which was found after the war among the archives of the Berlin Ministry for Foreign Affairs and was published in the *Matin* during the winter of 1920.

On August 4th the Kaiser told Nicolas Theotokis, the Greek Minister in Berlin, to inform King Constantine that an alliance had been concluded that day between Germany and Turkey, that Bulgaria and Roumania were aligning themselves beside the Central Powers, and that the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* had been ordered to join the Turkish Fleet. This communication wound up with an emotional appeal from the Kaiser to King Constantine as a comrade, as a German Field-Marshal, and as a brother-in-law, to mobilize the Greek Army and march beside himself.

Much has been made, by recent apologists, of King Constantine's anxiety to put all his available information about German intentions at the service of the Allies. So far as I am aware none of the information contained in this telegram was communicated, and I should certainly have heard from Admiral Mark Kerr, the head of the British Naval Mission in Greece, if he had been authorized to warn the Admiralty about those orders given to the two German warships. It should of course have been obvious that the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* then at Messina would make for the Dardanelles under full steam. There were only two alternatives—to escape into the open Atlantic where their existence afloat could only have been a matter of days, or to take refuge in Pola, which Austria, anxious to avoid war with Great Britain, had forbidden. One asks what course events would have taken if war with Austria had been

avoided and the German ships sunk off Constantinople in full view of the population. It would be idle to pretend that there would have been any likelihood of the least attention's being paid to a warning from King Constantine about the destination of the *Goeben* and the *Breslau*. Still, such a warning sent through Admiral Kerr would have established unassailably the sincerity of his good will toward the Entente. The offer of the Greek plan of operations to force the Dardanelles of which so much has been made by Admiral Kerr was after all only the offer of an opinion, and as the Scots judge said, 'paternity is a matter of opinion, but maternity is a matter of fact.' As it was, both the German warships coaled at Syra with the help of Greek lighters,* while Sir Berkeley Milne and his squadron were rushing about at the other end of the Mediterranean like a pack of beagles which has been allowed by the Whip to follow the scent of a rabbit instead of the authentic hare. As a matter of fact somebody at home did apparently have a notion that the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* might enter the Ægean, for a telegram was sent to W. H. Hastings, the British Consul at Syra, telling him to keep a look out for them. So, as dear old Hastings himself told me, he used to start away every morning in the heat and sit on the arid cliffs of Syra gazing out to sea for the German warships through a small telescope, 'though,' as he added, 'what I was expected to do if I saw them I don't know.'

Presently he had the melancholy pleasure of telegraphing to the British Legation in Athens that they were being coaled in the harbour of Syra itself.

Overlooking that harbour there was a large public asylum, and in 1917 I used to dream in moments of more

*I was told in Syra that a Greek destroyer helped, but I could not confirm this. However, everything was done to keep Admiral Coundouriotis occupied while the German ships went through.

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

acute exasperation that I had been given the power to intern in that bleak building some of the prominent figures of the war. It would have been an admirably appropriate spot.

In a Chronology of the War issued under the auspices of the Ministry of Information we read :

"August 5th. *Breslau* chased into Messina harbour by British cruisers. Owing to misunderstanding she escapes with *Goeben*, August 6th."

Misunderstanding has a delicate Chinese politeness. The Mediterranean becomes a willow-pattern plate.

Theotokis saw von Jagow, the German Foreign Secretary, after his Imperial audience, where the information he had been given by the Kaiser was confirmed. Theotokis himself urged the King to consider most carefully what the consequences might be if Greece failed to join Germany. King Constantine replied that, while the Kaiser knew how much his personal sympathies and political ideas inclined him toward the side of Germany, he could not after much reflection see his way to mobilize his army immediately, because the Mediterranean was at the mercy of the British and French fleets. They could destroy the Greek Mercantile Marine, occupy the Greek islands, and prevent the concentration of his army, which owing to the absence of railways, could only be effected by sea. He justified this to Admiral Kerr by telling him that he did not want to be bothered any more by the Kaiser and so was only pretending to be on his side. It must have been about now that some smart Roumanian journalist invented what was declared to be a fictitious telegram from the Kaiser to Queen Sophie, which warned her of a brother's wrath should Greece misbehave, and which ended with the words, 'Love to Tino.'

The dignity of King Constantine was finally impaired by that devastating diminutive. From the moment the comic papers of the Entente began to refer to him as Tino in

their cartoons, all hope of his changing his mind was lost. Nothing could have been so galling to his vanity as the publication of that pet name, for though the telegram was almost certainly fictitious he really was called Tino in the family circle. The telegram from the Kaiser urging his soldiers to exterminate the contemptible little British army was also apocryphal; but the effect of its publication was tremendous. The world felt that he might have said it. Big Willie, Little Willie, Ferdie, none of these vulgar abbreviations caught the popular fancy like Tino. They were too obviously invented. Tino rang true, and at the same time it struck the man in the street as an exquisitely absurd name for a King. Somebody should write an essay on the influence of ridicule on the history of the human race. What is the power of Mr. Lloyd George? His capacity for making his opponents ridiculous. What was Disraeli's? The same. Why are the Jews with justice the Chosen Race? Because they have a superb sense of the ridiculous.

‘How odd
Of God
To choose
The Jews,’ the poet sang.

Not at all. They are more acutely aware than any race of the Divine absurdity of the universe. And what on the whole is the most responsive audience to a master of ridicule? An audience gathered from the Cockney heart of the British Empire. If King Constantine could only have ‘marched,’ with what affection he would have been regarded by the British Tommy. Tino would then have become as much a source of strength as it had been of weakness. Perhaps the last thing forgotten about the Great War will be that the King of Greece was called Tino. And yet he was to become a tragic figure in the grand style.

Theotokis from Berlin continued to proclaim the invulner-

ableness of Germany. In his anxiety for the future of his country he went so far as to advocate that Greece should join Bulgaria in attacking Serbia, although he did profess himself able to understand the scruples that such a policy might inspire. Even the German Minister at Athens would not go so far as that. He demanded no more from Greece than neutrality, and threatened that if she attacked Bulgaria he would ask for his passports. While Theotokis and Streit were working away together on behalf of Germany, Venizelos, now back in Athens, was devoting himself to the interests of the Entente with which he felt that the interests of his own country were completely bound up. On August 18th at a Cabinet Council Streit announced that Prince Demidoff, the Russian Minister in Athens, had referred in conversation to the possibility of Greece's sending 150,000 men to fight beside the Serbians on the Danube. Venizelos at once declared that he was ready to place the whole of the Greek forces at the disposal of the Entente in accordance with their invitation. Streit said that it had not been an invitation, but merely a sounding by one of the Entente Ministers. And as a matter of fact Demidoff never suggested that those 150,000 should fight on the Danube.

"Further, he (Streit) objected that before Greece committed herself it was necessary to find out where she would be expected to fight, the conditions under which she would fight, and the compensations she would receive in the event of victory. As a last resort he proposed to adjourn the discussion until the afternoon, but M. Venizelos answered that there was no time to lose: the War would be over in three weeks. Whereupon M. Streit resigned and M. Venizelos offered to the Entente Ministers the adhesion of Greece forthwith."

The above extract is taken from Mr. G. F. Abbott's ludicrously ill-informed and prejudiced book *Greece and the Allies*, and he adds a footnote, which is apparently not

intended to be facetious, that his authority for this glimpse behind the scenes is M. Streit himself.

What Venizelos envisaged was the possibility of the Entente's going to war with Turkey, in which case it would be vital for Greece to be on their side. Let it be remembered that the Turks had already expelled 200,000 Greeks from Asia Minor and Thrace, most of whom were in the uttermost depths of destitution. Others had been driven into the interior with the accompaniment of every horror. The occupation of the Turkish islands, though settled by Treaties, had not yet been accepted by Turkey. There was the dishonourably protracted Italian occupation of Rhodes and the rest of the Dodecanese, and should Italy keep out of the war Greece by coming in might recover those islands as well. Venizelos believed in the certainty of ultimate victory for the Entente. He was well aware that, with the Bulgarian attitude still uncertain, it was hardly feasible for Greece to help Serbia actively, and even less feasible to send any force to France; but in a war with Turkey he saw that Greece could be useful and without danger to herself stand to gain enormously. King Constantine supported this offer to the Entente by Venizelos of Greek aid, and King George telegraphed personally to thank him for his proposal, which he said his Government would consider. But on consideration the British Government replied that it was anxious to avoid war with Turkey and advised Greece to make every possible effort to keep the Turks neutral. In his impressively modest book *Twenty-Five Years* Lord Grey accepts the full responsibility for this refusal of the Greek alliance; but it is clear that a heavier weight of responsibility must rest upon Lord Kitchener, who, obsessed as he always was by fears for the safety of Egypt had insisted on the importance of keeping Turkey out of the war until at any rate the Indian troops were through the Suez Canal. Lord Grey argues that

the postponement of Turkish intervention for a few weeks was necessary; but there has been nothing in the subsequent history of British rule in India to convince even the most credulous that those at the head of Indian affairs had enough imagination to appreciate the trend of Indian opinion. It would surely have been worth while to risk the effect on Moslem feeling in India of making the reception of the German warships a *casus belli* in order to secure the freedom of the Dardanelles for the remainder of that long war which the prescience of Lord Kitchener is reputed to have anticipated. And then, following that old bad precedent which had led to so much confusion and uncertainty in Europe before the war, the British Government went on to suggest to Greece that an understanding might be reached between the General Staffs of the two countries in case action should ultimately have to be taken. The Admiralty instructed Admiral Mark Kerr to make arrangements with the Greek General Staff by which in the event of Turkey's going to war a plan could be worked out to seize Gallipoli with a Greek army and let the British Fleet through to Constantinople. King Constantine at once repudiated any intention of going to war with Turkey, though he professed himself willing to accept the help of the Entente if Turkey declared war on Greece. It was becoming more and more obvious that the King and his Prime Minister were determined to follow different paths, and Venizelos went so far as to offer his resignation. At this time Roumania was trying to form an alliance of neutrals to resist interference from either the Entente or the Central Powers and, at peace themselves, supply provisions and arms to both groups of belligerents. In order to arrange the outstanding differences between Greece and Turkey plenipotentiaries were sent to Bucharest, at the first meeting of which Talaat Bey declared that his country was no longer free to negotiate; and it soon became clear

that not merely was Turkey committed to war on the side of the Central Powers, but also that Bulgaria was merely biding her time to follow Turkey.

This was the moment when Sir Edward Grey, presumably under the fatal influence of the Buxtons, agreed to the idea of reviving the Balkan League of 1912. Serbia and Greece by this plan were to surrender a certain amount of territory to Bulgaria in return for which they were to divide up Albania between them after the war. Roumania was also to make territorial concessions to Bulgaria and when the war was over compensate herself at the expense of Austria with Transylvania. The death of the Hohenzollern King Carol of Roumania in October and the fancied influence of the new Queen, a daughter of the Duke of Edinburgh, was supposed to increase the likelihood of securing Roumanian help. Meanwhile, Austria was offering Italy a large slice of Albania in order to persuade her on second thoughts to honour the Triple Alliance.

On October 31st the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* bombarded Odessa, and Turkey entered the war. At the beginning of November the Entente Ministers in Athens asked the Greeks to go to the help of Serbia, which Venizelos refused to do, unless Roumania would guarantee the neutrality of Bulgaria. There was no sign at present that the Entente was going to prosecute the war against Turkey with any vigour, and it was on Turkey that the bright eyes of Venizelos were always fixed.

Then on January 23rd, 1915, Sir Edward Grey made a more determined attempt to persuade Greece to enter the war, and for the first time mentioned territorial concessions to Greece in Asia Minor. Venizelos did not hesitate now. The dream of his life seemed capable of fulfilment, and although Sir Edward Grey had not asked him to surrender Drama and Cavalla to the Bulgarians he offered to do so. This was galling to the King who regarded himself with

greater pleasure as the saviour of his country from the Bulgarians than as a smiter of the Turks. His Scandinavian and Germanic lineage made him fearful of the Slav. He was above all Constantine the Bulgar Slayer. A street in Athens had been named after him thus. It was inevitable that he would decline to surrender Cavalla, which was so much his very own conquest, and certainly Greek opinion as a whole was infuriated by the suggestion that he should. News of the great Bulgarian loan successfully floated in Germany seemed to indicate immediate danger from Bulgaria. Even Venizelos was shaken and refused another request from the Entente to go to Serbia's help, though a British and a French Division were promised to guard against a Bulgarian attack through Macedonia.

However, when it soon began to look as if Great Britain meant to tackle the problem of forcing the Dardanelles seriously, Venizelos, nervous of failing to participate in the success of such an enterprise, offered three Greek Divisions to assist it. His enthusiasm overcame what some would call the timorousness, others the prudence of King Constantine; but when the Prime Minister came out from the Audience he was met by Colonel Metaxas, Chief of the Greek General Staff, who handed him his resignation as a protest against the idea of joining the Dardanelles expedition. Venizelos, realizing the bad moral effect of such a resignation, which had actually been published in the Press before he received it, called upon the King to summon the Crown Council of State for which the Constitution provided of ex-Premiers. It must have been a dramatic scene that Council of State on March 3rd, at which were present some of the bitterest opponents of Venizelos, and only those like myself who know from direct experience the excesses into which personal hatred of Venizelos could lead his political opponents can imagine and marvel at what must have been the magical fervour of an eloquence that could

persuade such adversaries as Rhallis and Dragoumis to agree with his policy. John Theotokis, a brother of the Greek Minister in Berlin demanded that the views of Colonel Metaxas should be heard, and on March 5th a second Crown Council was held, at which Venizelos agreed to offer no more than one Division instead of three. Even Theotokis was at last convinced; and all thought that Greek neutrality was finally at an end. The King, however, declared that rather than consent he would abdicate, and on the following day Venizelos resigned. He had hardly resigned before the replies arrived from the Entente Powers to his offer of Greek help. Great Britain wished for a more definite proposal after the King's decision, when she would consult with her Allies. France and Russia both demanded that Greece should not limit herself to war against Turkey, but declare war upon Austria and Germany also. The truth was that neither France nor Russia really liked the idea of a Dardanelles expedition. Indeed the French had only accepted it to keep the British from attacking Alexandretta, and thus, as they thought, imperilling the prospect of their Syrian supremacy, while Russia, though anxious for munitions, was even more anxious about the future of Constantinople. Much was naturally made by the opponents of Venizelos of these snubs from the Great Powers of the Entente. When to them was added the failure of the British naval attack on the Dardanelles during March, those who had been persuaded by the great Cretan's eloquence were beginning to say how wise the King had been after all. The King would have been less than human, had he not taken advantage of the diplomacy, tactics, and strategy of the Entente to assume the bearing of a Prometheus; but if he was a Prometheus he was a Prometheus bound, and the German eagle was gnawing at his vitals.

When Venizelos resigned, the Chamber was dissolved and M. Gounaris, one of the bitterest adversaries of Veni-

zelos, was made Prime Minister until a General Election could be held. There are those who found Gounaris fascinating. For me his long lank figure and sponge-coloured beard and soft speech had a repulsion that no snake has had. Of his ability as a party politician there is no doubt, and the wretched man paid the penalty for it when he was dragged from a sick bed to be executed on November 28th, 1922.

Owing to the fact that this election would have to be held under the new register, which would include the inhabitants of the territories won during the Balkan Wars of 1912-13, it did not take place until June 13th; but, even when Venizelos had been returned with a reduced but still large majority, owing to the King's illness the new Chamber did not meet until August 23rd, so that during the critical part of the Dardanelles operations the benevolent neutrality voted by the country was represented by the malevolent neutrality of the Government. Not that there was any open departure from the policy of apparent friendliness to the Entente. One of the first acts of the new Government through Zographos, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, was to send an assurance of this to the Entente Powers.

On April 11th the Ministers of the Entente were empowered to offer Greece in return for co-operation against Turkey territorial acquisitions in the Vilayet of Aidin. As usual the Foreign Ministries in London, Paris, and Petrograd failed to instruct their representatives in Athens properly, so that nobody ever arrived at what exactly this meant. Sir Francis Elliot supposed that it meant Smyrna and a large slice of territory behind; but neither M. Deville nor Prince Demidoff could give any positive assurances on this point. This is not surprising, because by this date the French were undoubtedly beginning to think that they would rather like Smyrna themselves. The secret Treaty of London with Italy was on the verge of being signed, and by that treaty Italy was to be given large

territorial rewards in Asia Minor. It is true that Smyrna was not actually mentioned, but like I with the apple-pie in the alphabet Italy had inked it, and from that moment, just as it darted through Emma with the speed of an arrow that Mr. Knightly must marry nobody except herself, it darted through the French with equal speed that Smyrna must belong to nobody except themselves. This is most important to understand, because the real reason for the Salonica expedition, for the French determination to bring Greece into the war under their auspices, and ultimately for the treachery of both France and Italy during the Greek invasion of Asia Minor in 1922 was that future of Smyrna, which was to be still further obscured at one of the Conferences by Mr. Lloyd George's promise of the city to Italy when the war he was only anxious to get on with should be won. It may be argued that the King, M. Gounaris, and the Greek General Staff were justified in maintaining that Venizelos's vision of a great Micro-Asiatic empire was indeed nothing but an idle dream. But then Venizelos understood better than they the British way of doing things.

The retirement of Venizelos from the helm afforded an opportunity to Prince George of Greece to take a diplomatic cruise round Athens. Prince George, although he hated Venizelos more bitterly than any member of his House, had married Princess Marie Bonaparte. He was a genuine lover of France, and his wife was a great friend of M. Briand. On April 14th another offer was made to come in with the Entente if the integrity of Greece's territory was guaranteed during the war and for a certain period afterwards; but it was stipulated that the Greek Army should confine its operations to European Turkey. This was a not unreasonable condition, certainly as reasonable as the condition by which Italy was presently to enter the war against Austria only. The Greek General Staff made what seemed at the time an exorbitant demand for the Entente to place

450,000 men in the field to avert any danger from Bulgaria. Yet Salonica was to absorb more men than that within a year. Delcassé insisted that Greece should come in unconditionally, and Prince George who was now back in Paris, advocated this course. More arguments followed, with Greece seeking pledges that the Entente refused to give. The truth was at this date the Allied diplomatists were filled with a ridiculous optimism about the entry of Bulgaria into the war on their side, of which there was as much chance as of a blue moon rising in the west. Not that they received any encouragement from Sir Henry Bax-Ironside, the British Minister in Sofia. Nevertheless the imminent entry of Italy into the war on the side of the Entente produced a fresh outburst of diplomatic Couéism which was now concentrated upon believing that Bulgaria would come in like Italy. The Serbians and the Greeks were warned off making any arrangements to help one another against their enemy, and on May 20th Bax-Ironside was authorized by Sir Edward Grey to offer a large piece of Serbian Macedonia to Bulgaria. To be sure, it was not to be taken over until after the war, and only then if the Entente were successful in obtaining Bosnia and Herzegovina for Serbia with an outlet on the Adriatic. Furthermore, the Bulgarian Government was informed that every effort would be made to secure Cavalla for them. There was a brief delay before this offer was actually made, because Petrograd wanted to present Cavalla to the Bulgarians outright without consulting the Greeks and Paris was unwilling to commit French policy like this until the Greek elections were over.

We are refreshed by a breath of common-sense diplomacy at last. It does seem incredible that any statesmen could have been quite so dull as to endanger the return of Venizelos to power on June 13th by a diplomatic *gaffe* like the offer of Cavalla at such a moment. However, French common-sense was overruled, and on May 29th the Ministers of

Great Britain, Russia, and France, now reinforced by the Italian Minister, communicated in writing the offer of the Entente to Radislavoff, the Bulgarian premier. In spite of this, when the Greek Elections were held, 184 seats out of 310 were won by the Liberals. After that *bêtise* of a fortnight ago it was not to be expected the Liberals would fare well in Thrace and Macedonia, where indeed they only won 4 seats out of 73. In Crete and the Islands, however, they swept the polls, and with a clear majority of 58 over any possible parliamentary combination against him Venizelos, who had had to contend even with German gold, might feel satisfied that the country endorsed his foreign policy. In spite of the victory his opponents took advantage of the King's serious illness to secure a delay in the formation of a government. The Chamber was not summoned, and for well over two months the Gounarist Cabinet remained in office. Indeed when I arrived in Athens it was still in office, Venizelos and his party not taking up the reins of government until August 23rd.

Meanwhile, the judiciously pessimistic Bax-Ironside had been recalled from Sofia, and on August 3rd the new British Minister, Mr. O'Beirne, was instructed to make a formal offer to the Bulgarian Government of Cavalla and a slice of territory behind it together with Serbian Macedonia. Bulgaria was informed at the same time that pressure would be brought to bear upon Greece and Serbia to surrender these territories, by denying them compensation elsewhere if they refused. On August 6th the Tsar of Russia, the King of England, the King of Italy, and the President of the French Republic, each sent a personal appeal to Serbia to surrender Macedonia to Bulgaria for the common good; but they sent no personal appeal to King Constantine. That night the Suvla landing failed. On August 20th Mr. O'Beirne telegraphed gloomily from Sofia to Sir Edward Grey that the entry of Bulgaria

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

into the war on the side of the Entente was more remote than ever; but of course it had never been less remote than Aldebaran from the Earth. Sir Valentine Chirol, who had been tinkering about with diplomacy in Sofia, moved on to tinker with equal ineffectiveness in Bucharest. German propaganda helped by Allied diplomacy was winning new adherents every day. King Constantine's convalescence made no advance. The Icon of Our Lady of Tenos which had been brought from its island to save him from death had left his slow recovery to the exigencies of politics. The delay in giving Venizelos the helm to which the people of Greece had called him seemed likely to wreck the ship of State among the shallows of party strife.

CHAPTER III

POINTS OF VIEW

IT must not be supposed that when I first landed in Phaleron from the *Imogen* I could have written a single word of that last chapter. Beyond sharing the widely spread belief that King Constantine was devoted to the interests of Germany in defiance of the general will of the country he ruled I knew really nothing. So, when within twenty-four hours of my arrival Admiral Mark Kerr took the trouble to put before me the position of the King in regard to the Entente, I was soon as much governed by the sway of purest monarchy as himself.

It was always said that the head of the British Naval Mission had a weakness for kings, and stories were told of him in this connexion which competed even with the stories that used to be told of Sir Herbert Warren, the late President of Magdalen. Yet I do not fancy that Admiral Kerr's devoted and unfaltering loyalty to King Constantine was inspired so much by the Hellenic Crown upon his high-domed head as by the Admiral's association of his own personality with that of Lord Nelson. I would hazard a guess that his championship of the Glücksburgs in Greece was linked in his mind with Nelson's championship of the Bourbons in Naples. Admiral Kerr was genuinely convinced that King Constantine was a much maligned and greatly wronged man. No consideration for his own career ever allowed him to abate in the slightest degree his advocacy of the King's case. It may be pointed out that although after leaving Greece he was given the command

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

of the Adriatic Squadron and later became Deputy-Chief of the Air Staff, his last British honour is the Companionship of the Bath given to him in 1913. I have never heard his seamanship criticized, so that political indiscretion must presumably be the reason for this conspicuous neglect to recognize his services. Let one who cannot agree with his interpretation of the Greek muddle pay a tribute of respect to a very chivalrous gentleman whose loyalty to an unfortunate Royal family is worthy of being mentioned beside the loyalty of those who sacrificed all they possessed for the House of Stuart.

Admiral Kerr, who had made up his mind that I could become a useful pleader of the King's point of view, suggested that he should come round to the Hotel d'Angleterre and explain the situation which was being so completely mishandled.

By the time he had finished with his exposition of our diplomatic behaviour, which lasted for the better part of a morning while I lay on my bed and he walked up and down that little room on the fifth floor of the hotel, I was feeling as indignant as he was about the injustice done. No doubt I was flattered by the apparent importance that a man in his position attached to my potential influence; but it would be doing the Admiral's eloquence an injustice to suggest that I was converted merely by my own vanity. It was his evident sincerity and really passionate belief in the unfair treatment of the King that made his arguments so persuasive. The first point with which he impressed on me the bad treatment of King Constantine was that, six weeks after Venizelos had resigned, the much abused Gounarist Cabinet with the full approval of the King and the General Staff had authorized Zographos, the Foreign Minister, to offer to the Entente the alliance of Greece, and that the Entente had not condescended even to acknowledge the offer. This was a different tale

from any I had been hearing about King Constantine's attitude.

"I suppose they were so much engaged at that time in bribing Italy to come in that they could not afford to pay any attention to Greece?" I suggested.

Admiral Kerr agreed that this was one reason, but he added that the Tsar had warned King Constantine personally that the Russians would oppose an alliance with Greece and in any case forbid a single Greek soldier to set foot in Constantinople.

"And yet," he declared indignantly, "the diplomats here treat the King as an avowed enemy and neglect him entirely for Venizelos, who as a matter of fact, has *not* the support of the Greek people. I tell you, Mackenzie, the King is entirely with us. Why, he put into my hands the plans of the Greek General Staff for forcing the Dardanelles and told me I might send them on to the proper quarter, which I did."

"And what was the result?"

"They were never even acknowledged."

It seemed incredible; but Admiral Kerr spoke with such bitterness that it was impossible not to believe his story.

"These things ought to be known," I exclaimed.

"That is why I am telling them to you. You have got to make them known. What you ought to do," he continued, "is to take on the Entente propaganda here. A counterpoise to Baron Schenck is badly required. At present the Germans are having it all their own way, though for that the Entente diplomacy deserves more credit than their ability. The German propaganda thrives on our mistakes. The latest thing is that the Entente has actually offered Cavalla to the Bulgarians without consulting Greece. And then we're surprised that the German propaganda makes headway."

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

I was thinking a little regretfully that it would be a much more amusing job to take on contre-espionage than newspaper propaganda, though I had to admit to myself that my pen could be used more practically than in making lists of suspected spies, the evidence for whose nefariousness was seldom convincing. I determined to put the matter before Sir Francis Elliot. If he expressed a desire for me to remain in Athens and undertake propaganda, I would do my best. There was no possibility now of any advance in Gallipoli until next Spring. A job in Athens would keep me active, whereas if I got into the hands of the military doctors I might find myself out of the war altogether. Next Spring I should be feeling fit for anything, and I was sure that Sir Ian Hamilton would take me back on his Staff for whatever adventures 1916 held in store. Should Sir Francis not think my services of value to propaganda, I could with a clear conscience try to secure the contre-espionage job.

"Unfortunately," Admiral Kerr was saying, "I'm going home for three months' leave. I've been rather ill."

This was a blow. My fancy had leapt ahead to the picture of myself in control of the propaganda, and a friend at Court like the Admiral would have been invaluable.

"In fact, I'm off in about a week," he went on. "I should have liked to take you round to see the King before I went; but the Legation people would probably object."

"Anyway," I put in, "I've no proper clothes for an audience."

Although the Admiral was on the verge of leaving Athens, he found time to give me several drives in his car. It was with him I first drove to Eleusis and stood by the water's edge, gazing across the bay to the mountains of Salamis. I remember that it was late afternoon and that I clambered up to stand upon the Sacred Way whose paving-stones are still visible as far as the plateau on which rose the Great Temple of the Mysteries, and I remember the

POINTS OF VIEW

thrill with which I imagined the torchlit procession that on the fifth day of the Greater Eleusinia moved solemnly along this Sacred Way, almost at this very time of the year. From where I was standing I could see a small green valley in which large isolated pines glowed intensely green in the golden light of the westering sun. I cannot recall that any other trees have ever seemed so supremely expressive of the life of their country. The oaks of Epping, the almonds of Sicily, the stone-pines of the Borghese Gardens in Rome, poplars beside a straight white road of France, birches leaning among the mossy boulders of a highland glen, all these speak of a country's heart; but they have never spoken for me with such sublime interpretation as those full-breasted maritime-pines in the Vale of Daphne spoke that afternoon. 'They *are* Greece,' I was saying over and over again to myself, and had I been a Giorgione I could have proved it by the way I would have painted them. I was aware of that eternal life in nature which has led men into seeking to express it by shapes of tutelary nymphs, and indeed a vision of Persephone herself would not have surprised me . . . but these moments outside time as we count it are ill to write of, for they remain incommunicable, since they demand for comprehension that the whole of a reader's experience should crystallize into one flashing instant of revelation of the same brightness as the writer's original experience which he is trying to reconjure with mere words. But those pines burning green in the clarity of that golden air, how can they burn upon the printed page? And let it be remembered that when I saw them I was standing on the stones of that Sacred Way which was only trodden by those to whom had been revealed the secret of immortal life.

On another occasion we drove down to Phaleron to see some skeletons whose burial-place had been uncovered by building operations. By the iron collars round their necks,

not yet even rusted away, they had been slaves in the flesh. Had these poor helots known the secret of immortal life? Yet it seemed almost indecent to be taking all this trouble to look at and wonder about the skeletons of more than two thousand years ago when there were so many dead at Gallipoli to see and wonder about.

But the drive I remember best was when the two daughters of Colonel Manos, the Master of the Horse, were with us. With one of them Admiral Kerr was exchanging light chaff all the way; with the other I was trying somewhat unsuccessfully to maintain the inevitableness of an ultimate victory for the Entente. They were living with their mother in a small flat, and we were invited back to tea. For some reason the car did not pull up outside their house, so we had to walk for a hundred yards or so. Probably the road was in a half-made state. Anyway, the Admiral walked on with 'Roxie,' and my argument continued with her sister. Suddenly she stopped in the glittering dust and, raising her arm above her head, she spoke with such passion against the proposal of the Entente to cede Cavalla to Bulgaria that I forgot she was a mortal girl not yet twenty and could have fancied I was listening to Pallas Athene herself pleading before Zeus the cause of her beloved Greeks. She was tall. Her complexion was the burnt rose of an old vase. Her profile was fit profile for a goddess, and a less impressionable person than myself might have imagined that she was speaking with the inspiration of divinity. While she stood there, that glorious young woman, delivering that glorious tirade against the oppressors of her country, I was thinking what a heroine of romance she would make. And perhaps even while she was declaiming against the iniquitous hypocrisy of great nations I began to weave a romance round her; but if I did it could not have been as rich a romance as that which reality wove round her, for this was the beautiful girl whom King

POINTS OF VIEW

Alexander married and who is now Her Highness the Princess Aspasia of Greece.

A minute or two after this we were all having tea in a small room crowded with furniture, and I was wondering how the dark and gentle Madame Manos with her sad face and quiet voice came to be the mother of this lovely and radiant fanatic.

I went away from that flat, convinced that a monstrous injustice was being perpetrated against Greece, that King Constantine was being slandered, and that Venizelos himself was nothing but at the best a second Themistocles. And then within a couple of hours the enthusiasm of a young man gave to the great Cretan the stature of a Pericles.

I was sitting by myself outside a café and, as I watched the people pass with leisurely footsteps in the warm twilight, I was remembering how Aspasia Manos had stood in that glittering dusty half-made street beneath the full blue velvet sky of afternoon calling vengeance down upon the enemies of her country. A young man with pale face, fair wavy hair, and light blue burning prominent eyes leaned across from the next table and raising his hat excused himself in perfect English for asking if I were a British officer from the Dardanelles. No doubt it was my duty to be instantly upon my guard and turn my back on a potential spy; but I had not a moment's hesitation in answering the young man's question simply and truthfully.

"Will you be through soon?" he asked. "Pardon me, sir, if I appear to intrude myself; but we are all praying in Greece that the Straits will be forced and that Constantinople will quickly fall."

No doubt it was my duty instantly to assure the young man that we should be in Constantinople probably by Michaelmas, and certainly by Hallowe'en; but there was in his bearing so much anxious sincerity that I had no heart to dismiss him with a cold lie.

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

"Not before next Spring, I fear," was my unpardonably indiscreet rejoinder.

He struck the small metal table before him with his clenched fist.

"This is terrible news to hear," he murmured, shaking his head. "But I am sure that we shall soon march with you. Venizelos will lead the country forward."

"You believe in Venizelos?"

He stared at me in astonishment.

"You are a British officer and you ask me that? Why, he is the greatest man Greece has known since the days of Marathon and Salamis."

Without mentioning names I told the young man of what I had been hearing two hours ago.

"But excuse me, sir," he said gravely, "such a person must be mad. The Palace clique do not represent the country. They must pretend to be so patriotic, but it is for the King they are thinking, not for Greece. It is for them a snobbism to speak like this. They are afraid of Venizelos because they think he will sweep away all this rottenness of Athens. For them the Μεγάλη 'Ιδέα—the Great Idea—is a nothing. They are so happy in their little toy court, and they do not want to see a greater Greece in which they will be lost. They are jealous of the island Greeks. They understand that the unredeemed Greeks of Asia Minor are bigger than they are. What is Cavalla if we may win Smyrna and perhaps even Η ΠΙΟΛΗ? We always call Constantinople THE CITY. And Venizelos knows that with the help of Great Britain, he can make a great Greece, because for Great Britain a great Greece will always be good. The German dream is to make Asia Minor another India, and it is because Constantine knows this he will not help to keep it from Germany."

For an hour that young enthusiast talked with a fervour that equalled the fervour of Aspasia Manos. And as he

POINTS OF VIEW

talked I saw Venizelos turn to the semblance of one of his own Cretan mountains and tower above the Athenian street, where the petty throng of unimaginative humanity came to seem as idle as the spume round the base of a cliff. He might even be stable enough to survive the shocks of an imbecile diplomacy, for whether that lovely rose-burnt girl were right or whether this pale young man with the flaming light-blue prominent eyes, nothing could justify the diplomatic handling of the situation in Greece by London, Paris, and Petrograd. Do I seem to be writing shrilly in calling it imbecile? About a year later when that imbecile diplomacy had turned the situation in Greece to a tragic farce, and when I was beginning to wonder if we were justified in spurring on the Venizelists to take matters into their own hands I asked Sir Francis Elliot to send a personal appeal to Sir Arthur Nicolson* and ascertain definitely what our policy was in Greece. I pointed out that, as affairs were marching in Athens, it might not be long before grave events took place.

"Neither you nor I, sir, in our respective positions would care to think that we had done anything to encourage the Venizelists to believe that Great Britain would regard favourably more aggressive methods on their side, unless Great Britain is prepared to support them. Affairs in Athens have reached such a pitch that it will soon be impossible to prevent something like a revolution. Now do we want that revolution? Does the British Government any longer attach any real importance to Greek intervention? Has the British Government any conception of what it wants to make out of the Levant when the war is over? Is a strong Greece desired under British influence? Or a strong Greece under French influence feared? What has really been promised to Italy in the Levant? And what is the feeling about Russia? What in a word is our policy

* The late Lord Carnock.

out here? It is only right that you should know, and you will then be in a position to instruct me. You are well aware how desperately anxious I am personally that we should throw our whole weight behind Venizelos and Venizelism. At the same time it is hardly fair to let my private enthusiasm create an entirely wrong impression of the official British attitude. I would far rather do everything in my power to stop matters going any further and discourage any kind of optimism among the supporters of Venizelos, however feeble I might consider our policy, than let them down. So don't you think, sir, that a personal telegram from you might extract from the Foreign Office what our policy in Greece really is."

Sir Francis pondered this appeal for a minute or two and then sent off in a cipher which is only used for exceptionally important communications a request that Sir Arthur Nicolson should let him know what our policy was in Greece, explaining the circumstances which led him to ask such a question at the moment. Sir Arthur Nicolson replied that he hoped within a few days to let Sir Francis Elliot know what our policy in Greece was. The Permanent Under-Secretary was too sanguine, for this is a paraphrase of the answer which Sir Edward Grey finally sent Sir Francis Elliot after two years of war.

"We have no policy in Greece except when possible to exercise a moderating influence on the French."

Any reader who has bothered even to skim the abstract I have given in the preceding chapter of a year's diplomacy may not be surprised to learn that some twelve months later this should be the answer that a Minister in charge of an ineffably complicated and difficult situation received from his Chief. Nevertheless that telegram was a shock when it came. There is no doubt that the word 'policy' made Sir Edward Grey wince. He must have felt that he was being asked what his little game was. It was the kind

of question one could have asked Mr. Lloyd George. He would have beamed at it. To be sure, we might have been no wiser after his reply; but he would not have administered by implication that chill Wykehamist rebuke. To me it will always be a mournful reflection that, during the first two years of the war when Mr. Lloyd George's impressionable and often genuinely imaginative cleverness and opportunism would have served the country well, it was served less usefully by an English gentleman, but that at the very moment of the war when the services of an English gentleman were badly required we were given the services of Mr. Lloyd George. At the Rome Conference in 1917 Sir Francis Elliot was asked by Mr. Lloyd George to give him an outline of the situation in Greece as he saw it. Sir Francis had hardly begun when Mr. Lloyd George's eyes began to wander to the window and presently he called Sir Francis's attention to a street musician whose performance evidently appealed to him more than an exposition of affairs in Greece. At that moment Lord Milner approached Sir Francis from behind and advised him in a low voice to say whatever he had to say about Greece to himself later on.

Lord Balfour was as much afraid of the word policy as his predecessor. In 1917 I wrote some observations on French policy in the Levant, by which Sir Francis Elliot was sufficiently impressed to send them to Lord Balfour with a note to say by whom they had been written and to endorse them, with a few qualifications of his own, as fairly representing what were the probable facts. Lord Balfour on receiving this communication observed to one of his assistants that he did not want to hear any nonsense about policies in the existence of which he did not believe, and that in any case he wanted to hear from Athens what Elliot himself thought and not what anybody else thought.

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

There is something to be said for this distrust of policies. As I write these words Mr. Baldwin is obtaining a great deal of support and sympathy, apparently because he has not the slightest idea what he wants to do and an evident disbelief in his own ability to carry out anything he might want to do. A lack of policy is what the English call 'muddling through somehow,' and they are proud of this ability to muddle through. Still, the process for those who have to do the active muddling is an exasperating one and the treatment of Greece during the Great War for Civilization was one of the most disreputable examples of muddling through in our history. Indeed, it was such an embrangled muddle in Athens that I am beginning to despair of giving these memories of it form or even coherence. I feel inclined like Mr. Lloyd George in Rome to spend my time looking idly out of the window at the ebb and flow of humanity in that distressful country.

Admiral Kerr's condemnation of Entente diplomacy was expressed even more strongly by 'Tommy' Cuninghame,* our Military Attaché in Athens. Cuninghame was the pragmatist Lowland laird whose portrait might look down from the walls of an old Ayrshire house. Bozzy might have turned the post-chaise aside to give Dr. Johnson an opportunity of meeting him. As likely as not he and Dr. Johnson would have mixed well for a time, because Cuninghame would probably have heard what Dr. Johnson was saying and would not have seemed so contemptuous of other people's opinions by ignoring them on account of his deafness. Bozzy would have had enough tact not to make the visit too long, and when the post-chaise was jolting northward again Dr. Johnson would perhaps have delivered an orotund laudation of their late host's good sense.

I had already met Cuninghame on the Peninsula which

* Col. Sir Thomas Montgomery-Cuninghame, Bt., D.S.O.

he had visited from Athens and, by the way he was now talking of the Dardanelles Expedition, without having been impressed by anything except the incompetence of its direction. He was living with his wife at the Hotel d'Angleterre where their large private sitting-room on the first floor became a salon of discontent with the way things were being managed in Greece. Lady Cuninghame was a tall woman whose dark beauty seemed out of place with her fondness for fox-hunting. Unable to hunt out here, she became absorbed in politics and believed that she was able to undo a little of the harm that the attitude of the Legation toward the King, the Court, and the General Staff was doing. Whether Admiral Kerr had bequeathed my cherishing to Cuninghame before he went home I do not know; but certainly the Military Attaché took a great deal of trouble from the first to turn me into a devoted supporter of the King's point of view. Argument with Tommy Cuninghame was a difficult business because he heard little of what was said to him and of what he did hear he usually barked a scornful contradiction. Centuries of struggles with the English, years of dusty theology from which, though he was not himself troubled by any theological problems, the habit of disputation had remained, a readiness to feel himself affronted, which seemed an inheritance from the affronts offered to Scotsmen who came south with James VI, had combined to make a man of long and illustrious lineage, with much more brain than the average Rifleman, present himself to the world as a querulous, obstinate, and disappointed soldier. It is a commonplace of diplomatic observation that all military attachés are inclined to meddle with what does not concern their duties, and as long as military attachés are allowed to have their own cipher and communicate directly with the War Office they will be subject to this temptation. Cuninghame had made up his mind that King Constantine's attitude toward

the Allies had been deliberately misunderstood in order to salve that French vanity which had been wounded by the speech at Potsdam. That was why the Royal attitude was prejudged and the Royal intentions were presumed. His contempt for the French would lead him even so far as to declaring sometimes that we were on the wrong side in this war. Not that he cared a great deal for Germany, but the thought of being at war with Austria was a real torment to his spirit. This dislike of being at war with Austria was widely felt in England, and it was particularly noticeable among naval officers. Many a one have I heard deplore the fact that the Austrians were our enemies. One of my most vivid memories of August, 1914, is of a sunny morning in the garden of the Vice-Provost at Eton. Desmond MacCarthy and his wife had just driven up from the station for lunch, and some small silver was wanted to pay the cabman. In the middle of the search Mrs. Warre-Cornish bore down on me across the lawn and said in her most sublimely inconsequent tone :

"*We* have declared war upon Austria. Sixpence can always be found. But *we* have declared war upon Austria ?"

However, stories about Mrs. Cornish should really not be told except to those who knew her. She is incommunicable.

Erskine was the member of the Legation to whom Cuninghame attributed most of the blame for neglecting and misprising the King. Erskine and I once agreed that probably the most logical way to express in the contemporary world one's Jacobite prejudices was to turn republican. It was really a point of view anticipated by the last Earl Marischal. Not that there was any active passion for republicanism in Erskine. He would have thought the President of the Greek Republic as ridiculous as he thought the King. But any reverence for Kingship with Divine

POINTS OF VIEW

Right had probably died in his family when that standard on the Braes of Mar had fluttered in vain. Cuninghame on the other hand like Mark Kerr genuinely believed a king was by the quality of his kingship endowed with superior discernment. Both of them acknowledged a semi-mystical quality in kingship, and neither of them seemed able to recognize that kings were nowadays only kings by the will of the majority. Consequently when King Constantine affirmed his goodwill toward the Entente the Chief of the British Naval Mission and the British Military Attaché believed him. They would have done him a greater service if, instead of rejecting as ridiculous any evidence to the contrary that was brought before them, they had sifted the evidence without prejudice. I do not doubt that, before the farce in Greece was played to its tragic end, we were all of us guilty of prejudicing our judgment; but looking back on that time after a lapse of years and with as thorough knowledge as anybody at first hand of what actually did happen I can only recognize that the bad example was set by the party that came to be known as Royalist.

Devoted adherents of King Constantine like Cuninghame were often most indiscreet in the way they criticized the British Legation. This encouraged the King to suppose that, if he could get rid of the allied diplomats whom he thought unsympathetic to his point of view, he would be able to justify his attitude. The muddle was being made by those responsible for allied diplomacy at the fountain head. The muddle was being made because the positive and mutually incompatible ambitions of Russia, France, and Italy were being handled by the British Foreign Office in a spirit of compromise which in time of war is apt to prolong the catastrophe itself, and exacerbate its incidents. The muddle in Athens was linked up with the muddle at Constantinople, with the muddle at Sofia, with the muddle

at Bucharest, with the muddle at Gallipoli, and it was presently to become more inextricably confused than ever by that muddle of muddles at Salonica. Cuninghame believed that the King could be cajoled. Erskine did not. But if every diplomat in Athens had agreed upon a right policy, and if that policy had been enthusiastically endorsed in Greece by a united nation, there would have been the same muddle, because there were three of the four major allies with irreconcilable ambitions of their own, and one ally with apparently no ambition at all except a mild desire to win the war in a gentlemanly way. It was impossible for the average Greek to imagine that opinions like those of Cuninghame could have been expressed unless he had behind him a strong political party at home. Continental nations do not understand that the country is managed by permanent officials who will remain in power whatever the government. My pen runs ahead. In August, 1915, I had as many delusions about British policy as the Greeks themselves. It seemed clear from what Cuninghame and Kerr told me that grave mistakes had been made. I had already learnt at Gallipoli the cost of such mistakes, but I still believed that there were reasons for those apparent blunders. I still believed that there were directing minds at the Foreign Office with boundlessly far-sighted ideas about the future of Europe. When I set off to stay with Sir Francis Elliot at Cephissia I was determined to suggest myself as a suitable person to conduct a propaganda that would in its humble way contribute to the fulfilment of those far-sighted aims.

At dinner that night I said I had been astonished to hear how much King Constantine's attitude had been misjudged, and I can still see the expression on the face of Rendel who was also staying with Sir Francis, and I can still recall the tone of his voice as he looked quickly up from his plate across the table and advised me to hear the other side before

POINTS OF VIEW

I jumped to conclusions. And after dinner Rendel gave me a little lecture on the diplomatic history of Athens for the last year, which made me realize that the value of anything that Kerr or Cuninghame had told me depended on the King's truthfulness, or perhaps it might be fairer to say the extent to which he might be able to deceive himself and be deceived by others. In spite of Rendel's lecture I was still prejudiced on the King's behalf, and it was with an idea of being fair to him that I suggested to Sir Francis Elliot the advantage of presenting the Greek case in the British newspapers as well as the British case in the Greek newspapers, because a nation as susceptible as the Greeks were to newspaper politics was likely to respond to a well-informed and just appreciation of their point of view. Sir Francis agreed that the comments of the British Press on the Greek situation were usually wild or stupid. This was not the fault of the Press correspondents in Athens who with one or two exceptions were extraordinarily anxious to be helpful, even at the expense of their instincts as correspondents. The Press censorship at home, however, made it impossible to ensure that the British public would be given a reasonably correct account of anything anywhere.

The next morning Sir Francis and Rendel went off to their day's work at the Legation, and I was left to enjoy the comparative coolness of the pine-scented peace of Cephissia. Unfortunately my state of health made this impossible, and I had to spend a furtive and embarrassed day trying to pretend I was unaware of the Niagara which roared at intervals through the coolness and silence of the shaded house. By evening I was a nervous wreck. The next morning I went back to Athens with Sir Francis to consult Dr. Aravantinos, who told me that I was too ill to be at large and must make up my mind to go into a clinic at once and live for a while on boiled rice. He knew of a most

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

suitable establishment and would make arrangements for me to go in the following morning.

Somewhere round about half-past six that evening I was taken to a famous café at the end of the University Boulevard, the name of which eludes my memory. Here faced by the prospect of nothing but boiled rice for days to come I was presented by the waiter with a card on which some thirty different kinds of ices were listed. The temptation was atrocious. My soul responds to a mere vanilla ice smeared out into the thick glass of an Italian ice-cream vendor ; but here was an opportunity to sample ices which were to the ordinary vanilla as Hyperion to a satyr. Although I knew nothing could be worse for my complaint than even a moderate indulgence in ices, greed and curiosity were too much for me. I really did feel that life was less important than sampling these ices to discover which were the most delicious. Some of the fervour which has given martyrs to science was mine. I understood and sympathized with the impulse that drives a man to explore the North Pole. I comprehended at last the passionate recklessness of Bluebeard's Fatima. Even without dysentery and cystitis it would have been impossible for any man to sample every ice on that list, and I do not remember that ever in my life I was so anxious to make a right choice. Paris faced by the problem of awarding an apple to the most beautiful of three goddesses was in no predicament at all compared with mine. I looked at the waiter. Could I rely on his taste to direct me aright, so that whatever pain I might suffer on the morrow would not be embittered by the thought that for all I was suffering I had chosen the wrong ices ? And while I was trying to decide with what varieties I should make myself that amount more ill than I was already I found myself being introduced to the wives of various members of the British Naval Mission, whose habit it was to meet here at dusk. I had not been long enough

POINTS OF VIEW

away from Gallipoli to be unsusceptible to the charm of hearing attractive young Englishwomen talking together in a foreign land, their familiar accents sounding the more throatily sweet in such a setting. To right the marble buildings along the wide boulevard glimmered in the warm Athenian dusk. To left the trees in the garden of the King's Palace were merging beneath a luminous sky that was already lightly sprayed with early stars. Close at hand resounded the dark-eyed laughter and shrill southern chatter of the café, and on the wide pavement before its orange-lighted windows the faces of the customers were nodding to one another round the crowded tables like violas in a bough-pot. And then amid this setting, which would have enchanted with its atmosphere of gaiety and leisure the least impressionable of onlookers, but which to one who for weeks had been wondering if such scenes still existed anywhere on this planet was as dazzling and beguiling as a jewelled cavern of the Arabian Nights, to be told by a charming young Englishwoman with the roses of England in her cheeks that one had met her before, and on asking where and when to be reminded of two delightful little girls with whom one had wandered along the cliffs at Hunstanton twelve years earlier, that was to produce the very person who should be able to advise one which ices to choose. This was Rachel Winter, whose husband Alec* was the Admiral's Secretary. Presently he joined the party and I heard another point of view about the Greek situation. I also heard which were the best six ices on the list and of those six I ate four. Then, thinking of that boiled rice before me and deciding that I might as well make the most of what life remained to me, I wound up my last night of freedom with a mayonnaise of crayfish at dinner.

I did not suggest to Dr. Aravantinos, when he felt my

* Wing-Commander A. Winter, O.B.E., R.A.F.

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

pulse in his consulting room the next morning, a possible explanation for its being even slower than yesterday ; but when he shook his benign head and told me that it was high time I was being properly looked after in a clinic I agreed with him cordially.

CHAPTER IV

FRESH FIGS

An Interlude

THE clinic to which Dr. Aravantinos and I drove off on the morning of the twelfth of August was appropriately situated in Asclepius Street. The proprietor like all Mediterranean doctors with nursing-homes of their own had as much the air of a hotel manager as of a doctor, and indeed with notable exceptions like Dr. Aravantinos most Mediterranean doctors convey to their patients that their purses are being felt at the same time as their pulses. English doctors manage to avoid giving this impression. On behalf of Mediterranean doctors it must be allowed that when they do send in their bills they expect their patients to tell them that they have charged twice as much as they ought; but I never heard of anybody's venturing to tell an English family doctor that his bills were exorbitant.

The threshold of a nursing-home always casts a chill upon the spirit, and I left behind me with regret the noise of the sunny street. The interior of the clinic was white and almost ostentatiously clean, permeated too by the authentic odour of disinfectants which should encourage the patient to suppose that he cannot remain ill for long in such a hygienic atmosphere. The windows of my room looked out upon a long narrow street, which sloped gradually downhill toward the middle of the city; but in this silence and whiteness I was glad to hear from below the shouts of children

playing and the cries of street vendors. There was no furniture except a white bed, a white cupboard, a white table, two white chairs, and on the floor an expanse of well waxed linoleum.

Among the advantages of the clinic he had chosen for my cure Dr. Aravantinos had told me that the nurse who would look after me could speak Italian well, she being a native of Corfu. After I had undressed and got into bed this Corfiote nurse arrived and carried off all my clothes. Whether the notion was to prevent my rebelling against the diet of boiled rice and escaping back to a world of ices, or whether it was that the clothes were considered unhygienic I do not know, but when they were carried off like this it was soon revealed on my asking for something from one of the pockets that my nurse knew as much of Italian as I knew of Icelandic. She was a pasty-faced heavily built woman with a great deal of dingy orange hair, and she did not seem at all ashamed of her complete failure as an Italian speaker. I do not suppose her conversation would have been entertaining, even if I had had the benefit of it; but the first hour or two in a nursing-home is always a particularly lonely experience, and I should have been glad to talk to anybody. I felt sorry for myself at being dragged away so quickly from the charm of Athens and immured in this white room, with the prospect in an hour or so of having to endure one of those extremely unpleasant operations which cystitis sometimes necessitates. The only book which I had to read for the moment was a quarto edition of Lucian. Feeling too languid to wrestle with a lexicon and a little resentful that my knowledge of ancient Greek had been no kind of help toward conversation with the doughy-cheeked nurse, I leant back on my pillows and began to whistle to myself.

A minute or two later the nurse put her head round the door of my room.

“Μή σφυρίζετε (mē sphyrizete),” she said.

Evidently that meant ‘do not whistle.’ I tried to link up with classical Greek the word she had used, and decided at first it had something to do with σφαῖρα (a ball), connecting it with the pea one sees leaping about in the hole of a tin whistle, but in turning over the pages of the lexicon I came upon σφύζω. Syrx! The Arcadian nymph who was fleeing from Pan was changed into the reed out of which he fashioned pipes to play upon his lost love for evermore. And then I suddenly comprehended that I had heard the old negative imperative.

I cannot hope to convey the extraordinary pleasure it gave me to hear such a classical exclamation. It had been disappointing to find that in modern Greek the other negatives had been debased out of recognition, and it was absurdly gratifying to find that through all the centuries the old negative imperative had remained the same as when the *Iliad* was new. In a flash I was far from the sanitary whiteness of the clinic, far from the thickset pie-faced Corfiote nurse, far from the hoarse cries of the fruit-vendors in the sun-tormented street below, far away in 1892 and the classroom of Mr. MacDougall at St. Paul’s Preparatory School. Those were the days when to teach a lot of inky little boys assistant-masters were expected to dress with more care than nowadays people would dress for a garden party at Buckingham Palace. Mr. MacDougall’s frock coat always seemed to us the extreme of dandified elegance, and Mr. MacDougall’s high silk hat had such an elegant gloss that I believe we were shamed into smoothing down our own disordered hair to be worthy of its sleekness. I was remembering when Mr. MacDougall, who with his handsome florid clean-shaven face and slightly mincing manner, delighted to play Beau Brummell in his own class-room, was driven into shouting as vulgarly as any ordinary assistant-schoolmaster by exasperation at the failure of most of his

class to show the least inclination to grasp when to use μή and when to use οὔ.

That command not to whistle unwound the whole panorama of Greek lessons. I was poring again over Rutherford's Greek Grammar so unsuitably bound in that smooth pale blue cloth which cried out for the spidery decorations of a schoolboy's pen. Here in the heart of Attica itself I was wrestling again in memory with that perverse Attic dialect. I had always been a devout champion of Athens against Sparta. I was a hoplite at Syracuse; I would have shown no mercy to any island untrue to the Delian Confederacy; I even grudged Leonidas the glory of Thermopylæ. But the Attic dialect did strain one's loyalty. The Athenians built the Parthenon; but it must count against them that they had to change a word like ναός for a temple and decline it quite eccentrically as νεώς. They were mad on νεώς, and one asks if the maritime collapse was not hastened by expecting their Ionian friends to use such a genitive for ναῦς a ship. One can imagine an island like Mytilene withdrawing from the Confederacy of Delos merely because it was expected to employ such a provocative genitive.

Little did I guess at this date how much of the Greek history I had learnt at school would with myself as one of the protagonists be repeated nearly two thousand years later.

And after Rutherford's light blue Grammar I was seeing in memory Arnold's Greek Prose bound in a dull shade of green bice. This was surely one of the least inspiring textbooks ever written, comparable in its dreariness and occasional pedagogic facetiousness only to Arnold's Latin Prose, which was bound in a faded magenta. In almost the first exercise there were some sentences about a crocodile bringing forth its young from eggs. What less likely topic would a beginner in any language wish to discuss than the

generative process of a crocodile? Then that quarto of Lucian was reviving another memory of Greek. It was 1894 now, and I was in Brittany with a party of small boys who under the tutelage of Mr. Spencer and Mr. Sankey, two popular masters from St. Paul's Preparatory School were confronting the problems of their future careers.

Williamson? Williamson had been cramming for his *Britannia* examination. A masterful youth, Williamson, with rumbled wavy hair and as much self-possession as one of Marryat's heroes. Where was Williamson now? A Post-Captain?

And Tull? Where was bullet-head Tull now? Tull and I had not been sympathetic. It had been Tull who revealed one of the dreadful skeletons that exist in every school-boy's domestic cupboard. It had been Tull who revealed that I was still subject to the sway of a governess. How Tull obtained possession of that secret I did not remember. Perhaps he was invited to some children's party in Kensington, an alien from the other side of the Park perhaps, who secure as a Campbell by Loch Awe, had been immune from the vengeance of those outraged Kensington boys, the tale of whose governesses and kiddy sisters he would have carried back for the sneers of Bayswater. I could hear again the coldly malicious innocence of Tull's voice as, amid the green shadows of that Brittany garden on the cliff's edge by the sandy Loire estuary, he asked:

"Your governess's name is Stanwell, isn't it?"

And I could feel the warmth of a dead blush as some young wit who overheard him exclaimed:

"Stankwell? What a name!"

And Van Someren? A round, ruddy-faced, plump and cheerful boy in a sailor suit, in his manner some of the Dutch homeliness that was in his name.

And Head? He too in a sailor suit with a great deal of white braid over it. I could see his fair hair cut to the

texture of moleskin, and hear again his squeaky excitable voice. Head and I had shared a bedroom, the window of which was brushed with the loaded boughs of a fig-tree. We used to lean out over the sill, pulling off the figs and eating them and talking to one another long after we should have been in bed. And when we had eaten so many figs that we both had collywobbles we would be afraid to venture forth to solve the problem owing to a tale we had been told by an old Breton farm-wife of an evil woman's vampire ghost in the habit of kidnapping children and devouring them. The tale must have come down from the time of Gille de Rais who employed a woman to decoy the children he murdered. Their little bones had been found in the cellars of his castle when he was burnt as a sorcerer, and the ruins of that castle were just across the Loire. We had seen them and shuddered over the horrible tale.

The pie-faced nurse came in again and I managed to make her understand that I wanted to know what was being cried in the street below.

“Σῦκα φρέσκα (seeka freska),” she told me.

Fresh figs! Queer that I should be thinking of the adventures of Head and myself with figs in Brittany so many years before, and that up and down this dusty Athenian street a fruit-vendor's voice should be crying ‘fresh figs’ to-day. And then I was seeing instead of the big quarto of Lucian beside me the slim dark-green volume of the Cambridge University Press which included the *Charon*. That was the Greek text set for the scholarship examination at St. Paul's School in September, 1894, to wrestle with which these weeks in Brittany were intended to equip me. I had only been eleven years old; but I could remember what fun it was to be reading a genuine work in Greek after the long boredom of exercises in grammar, and with what clearness I had pictured the old ferryman's indignation when Menippus had not so much as an obol to

pay his fare across the Styx. It had been with Mr. Spencer that I had stumbled through the witty dialogue. We worked out of doors whenever it was feasible in that not too sunny summer; and beside me on the emerald Breton grass, which grew lush beside a wooded pond, there was always a butterfly-net, for that was the heyday of butterfly collecting when to catch a clouded yellow was to fancy one held the world in one's net. Pleasant days! Mr. Spencer of the deep bass voice and big hooked nose, was not a man to let a sentence of Greek interfere with the legitimate occupations of boyhood, and the toughest aorist was allowed to remain undigested if a silver-washed fritillary should come sailing over the brambles by the edge of the wood. The other master, Mr. Sankey, was responsible for my Latin and it was with his help I had staggered through the first book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. A tall man with what seemed a huge cleanshaven face, he was just as sympathetic as Mr. Spencer and never unwilling to let the tale of Deucalion and Pyrrha halt when a white-admiral was sighted over the top of an oak tree.*

I must have been whistling again, for the pie-faced nurse put her head round the door and repeated crossly: 'μή σφουρίζετε,' adding what I divined to be a reminder that there were other patients in the clinic who might be disturbed.

This time the negative reminded me of those conditional sentences which shed a blight upon the future of the budding Greek scholar. Present particulars and present generals, εἰ and εἰν, μή always in the protasis, οὐ always in the apodosis, optatives and subjunctives waiting like Scylla and Charybdis to rend or swallow the wretched youth,

* I wonder if he ever dreamed, when he sat on that Breton grass, puffing away at a very large pipe while a small boy ploughed through Ovid's hexameters, that he himself would one day suffer a metamorphosis as surprising as any recounted by Ovid from an assistant-master in charge of a low class at a private school into the Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain.

who blind to the beauty of a really exact medium for the written word supposed that εἶ and εἶν had merely been invented to destroy his peace of mind . . . but of εἶ and εἶν I have written already in *Sinister Street*, and what I have said about Dr. Brownjohn there will serve without the alteration of a word to describe my experience with the great F. W. Walker, the High Master of St. Paul's.

Later on that day, when Rendel called to find out how I was getting on, I forgot all about my early struggles with classical Greek in obtaining advice from him how to begin my fresh contest with modern Greek. Busy though he was, he found time to pay me many visits and every time he came he brought with him books he thought I should like to read. Indeed, all the while I was in the clinic people were wonderfully kind about visiting me. Sir Francis Elliot came several times, and used to sit on the edge of the chair by my bed like a grey bird about to fly from its perch at any moment. At one of these brief but delightful visits he told me that the Foreign Office had turned down his suggestion that my services should be employed for propaganda in Athens because they had already appointed a man for the job. This was Gerald Talbot,* of whom more presently.

V came to see me almost every day, entering my room on each occasion as cautiously as a burglar. His suggestion about employing my services had been favourably received, and he was sure that I could count on remaining in Athens.

"The only difficulty, my dear fellow, is the money side of it," V told me, as sitting by the bed he gravely goggled at me through those great horn-rimmed spectacles.

"C has no money to spare for contre-espionage," he went on. "Of course I can pay B's salary out of my funds; but there is still the problem of Liebig. You see, you can't

* Commander Sir Gerald Talbot, K.C.V.O., C.M.G., O.B.E., R.N.V.R.

FRESH FIGS

just get rid of a man in our service. Not that I think Liebig would turn nasty . . . but still. . . .”

V gazed before him and, as he tried to extract from the antiseptic air of the clinic a just cause and impediment against Liebig's remaining in Athens, he shook his head.

“Of course,” he went on, “I might hint to Liebig that he is compromised. In fact the other day he told me himself that he was afraid he was doing no good by remaining on in Athens, and that it might be better if he rejoined his regiment. But I do wish he would make the suggestion definitely. I do *not* like the idea of asking him to hand over his job to somebody else. I am not satisfied with his work. He holds the same rank as myself, which is always a mistake. I think it would be better if you said nothing to Liebig about having talked over the future with me. I shall tell him that G.H.Q. wants to have a liaison officer here. I do hope Deedes will be able to allow you something from his funds. Then, if later on I can persuade Liebig to see he really has outlived his utility in Athens, perhaps he will make a formal request to be transferred, in which case you can be seconded at once. But you do appreciate, don't you, that in our service we cannot afford to let anybody we have employed nurture any kind of grievance? It might be extremely dangerous.”

As he said this V turned to look apprehensively over his shoulder at the white door of my bedroom.

“Of course,” he asked, shaking his head, “there is no chance of our being overheard in here?”

“And anyway,” I said encouragingly, “nobody in the clinic speaks a word of English.”

But by this time V had moved across to the door on tip-toe and was opening it with excessive caution. Apparently the glance he had of the empty white corridor reassured him, for he closed the door and sat down again by my bed.

“You can never be sure about anything in our service,”

he told me with a hint of reproach. "You may not think that anybody speaks English in this clinic; but, my dear boy, you can never be sure."

I did not realize at this date to what an extent his position of responsibility in the secret-service had begun to prey upon V's imagination. Moreover, in spite of my own experience as an amateur spy catcher in Mytilene and elsewhere, I was still such a novice that my senior's manner was bound to be impressive. Finally, the will to believe existed in myself. There may be none so blind as he who will not see, but the converse is equally true. Athens had presented itself to my imagination as a city not less mysteriously romantic than eighteenth-century Venice. I had no desire to look on through the weary eyes of a bored and sceptical observer at the masque that was being played. My object in writing these memories is as I have already said to try to recapture the mood in which I passed through various adventures, and I have to free myself from all that sophistication of experience with which the years in passing cover one like the lichen with which a tree protects itself against the salt winds. I have to disem-barrass myself of that deadly sense of the ridiculous which sooner or later always seems to surround my own and other people's behaviour. No one is better aware now than I am how ridiculous V and I were as we talked in whispers about our mysterious work on that sunny Athenian afternoon fifteen years ago; but on the afternoon itself I was still captivated by the infinite romance and excitement that Athens promised, and if V had shown the least inclination to behave like an ordinary human being I should have been quick to resent his implication that the secret-service was not what I as an impressionable writer of fiction wanted it to be. So L and B and C and V danced in a rapture of romantic suggestion across my fancy. I saw them as Schumann may have seen his *Lettres Dansantes* in that

FRESH FIGS

Carnaval which has been one of my musical inspirations and I was thinking that I would choose an initial more subtle, more sinister, more prepotent than any.

"I shall call myself Z," I told my new chief.

"But be very careful never to blot your signature," V warned me with gratifying responsiveness. "Although of course, you will always make a point of burning every scrap of blotting-paper in your office every night before you go home. I always use one of those cast-iron flower pots, and they are quite useful for knocking one's pipe into."

This was the right way to receive the announcement of my chosen initial, and I was as fully determined as any young ensign entrusted with the Colour of his regiment or his King that never should it fall into the hands of the enemy.

V was inclined to regret that the Foreign Office had not agreed to Sir Francis Elliot's suggestion about my doing newspaper propaganda.

"It would have been a perfect blind," he sighed. "Almost as good as my apparent job of looking after the refugees from Asia Minor with my office right opposite the headquarters of the Greek General Staff. I do hope so very much that Deedes will be able to contribute something from his funds. C doesn't like spending money on contre-espionage, for after all," V concluded in a solemn whisper, "the real object of C's organization is to obtain information about the enemy."

"Σύκα φρέσκα," the fruit vendor was crying in the dusty street below.

And "Seeka freska," I was crying within myself, for the prospect before me in Athens when I should emerge from this clinic was not less richly perfumed.

Lady Cuninghame was another of my visitors. She came to preach the gospel of keeping in with the King and the Court party. It was perhaps not unwelcome to her that

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

the bias which her husband believed should be given to our policy inclined in a Royal direction. Whatever might be said in favour of the Venizelists, and she for one thought it was very little, nobody could pretend that in manners and charm they could compare with their opponents. She made me feel that social as well as political sagacity demanded my adherence to the Royalists. She implied that the failure of the Legation as a whole to appreciate the King's point of view was due at least as much to gaucherie as to diplomatic incompetence. She was sure that poor dear Willie Erskine would not be so dull and so obstinate if Viola instead of taking the children back to England had remained in Athens to keep him on the straight path of social correctness. Mark Kerr and Tommy knew so much better where our interests lay than people like Goodhart and Rendel, and really it did seem extraordinary that poor Willie Erskine should have taken up the bearish attitude he had. He had just let himself go since his wife had left, and seemed to think of nothing nowadays but hurrying away from the Chancery to doze over some stupid book. It was impossible to persuade him to go to a party. And of course Sir Francis had been here too long. It was always a mistake to let a Minister remain too long in any country. He began to lose his sense of detachment, and to look at things too much from the point of view of a native. A Minister coming out here with a fresh eye would have seen at once what a mistake it was for us to identify ourselves with what was after all merely a political party. The King could not help feeling this. Only last week he had said quite bitterly that the members of the British Legation seemed to think they were election agents for Venizelos. She had done her best to convey this impression to the Legation; but they were hopelessly prejudiced, and her only reward for trying to do all she could in the very difficult situation out here was to be told that Sir Francis

objected to ladies always going in and out of the Chancery. She had told Lord Craven* only last week that he really must make it clear to them at home how hopeless everything would remain out here until the present members of the Legation were displaced by less prejudiced new-comers who would be prepared to see that there was a great deal more to be said for the King's point of view than for the point of view of a radical upstart like Venizelos, who was after all nothing but a pushing little Cretan lawyer and owed everything to the King's favour. And 'Uffy' Craven had agreed with her, and had promised to make certain discreet representations in exalted circles at home, and she should say exactly the same to Lord Ilchester who was the War Office messenger this week, so perhaps gradually they would begin to realize at home the foolishness of relying too much upon a Legation, hardly one of the members of which could see anything out here except the figure of Venizelos.

And I who at this date was as ignorant of Court intrigue as young Fabrizio del Dongo, who had moreover no Count Mosca to give me the essence of Stendhal's profound and lifelong study of the ways of the world, was only too ready to fancy that Lady Cuninghame spoke with the wit and wisdom of the Duchess Sanseverina in that immortal guide to worldliness, that supreme novel of manners, *La Chartreuse de Parme*. It was no doubt flattering to be assured that my arrival in Athens had created as much curiosity about my *raison d'être* as might almost be called a stir, for I did not know then that in a Balkan capital the arrival of a commercial traveller at a time of political excitement is capable of producing the wildest speculation. It was flattering to be told that the general opinion was that I had been sent here to counter the work of Baron Schenck. Nothing is easier for a novelist than to imagine himself a figure of considerably more importance than he actually is,

* The late Earl of Craven.

and I fear my sense of the ridiculous was at this moment lying dormant beneath the gaudy trappings of romance. Moreover, my own personality was already feeling the effect of that subtle and sinister and perhaps not altogether unambitious initial Z. With so much excitement in store for me outside the white walls of this clinic, with princesses waiting to be converted by my eloquence into passionate adherents of the Entente, with courtiers hopeful of the effect my judicious mind would have upon the attitude of the authorities at home toward the upstarts of New Greece who were trying to rule the roost in Old Greece, with a personality like Baron Schenck of worldwide notoriety already furrowing his brows in perplexity at my advent, it was not surprising that I was longing for my freedom, and that the meals of boiled rice and boiled chicken from being merely unpalatable became absolutely revolting.

The best cook in the world may be puzzled to make the boiled leg of a chicken easily distinguishable from the boiled heel of a boot, and the cook of that clinic was not a good one. Although I like eggs, I have never been able to feel anything but a profound antipathy to the hen herself, and the skin of a hen when boiled is exactly what one would expect such a loathsome animal to bequeath to the living world. That yellowish membrane pitted like a piece of old moth-eaten ermine, with those grey speckles from which dingy feathers once sprouted, can neither be chewed nor swallowed whole. It lies about on the tongue as a piece of damp washing blown from a clothes-line lies upon the grass beneath. Nor is the flesh veiled by that snippet of damp suède easier to masticate.

Every day at one o'clock and at six o'clock the leg of a chicken, with nothing to garnish it but boiled rice, nothing to drink with it except boiled water, lay miserably upon my plate. I used to wonder what happened to the other limbs of the hens whose legs were chopped off to feed me.

FRESH FIGS

A similar puzzle once presented itself when travelling through some of the rural districts of America. Day after day the only part of a chicken I saw was an angular backbone to which adhered like moss to a Gothic ruin a few shreds of coffee-coloured flesh. What happened there to the legs ?

I had to remain in the clinic for nearly a fortnight because my temperature stayed obstinately over two points below normal. Remembering how much excited I was over my future in the secret-service I shudder now to think what kind of state my mind would have been in had it risen to a couple of points above normal. During the last weekend letters came from G.H.Q. which cheered me up considerably about the prospects of that future. Sir Ian Hamilton wrote to say that it would be impossible for him and the General Staff to keep me as a sort of extra attached officer working in Athens, but that if I were well enough to act as a liaison officer between Athens and G.H.Q. staying alternate weeks at one and the other such an arrangement would be possible.

Deedes wrote :

I have just seen Pollen, as it was necessary to regularize your position. All that is necessary is for you not to have yourself reported sick. Barring that, no one will ask where you are (officially I mean). All that will be known is that you will be Ib and employed 'anywhere' by me. You have therefore no cause for worry, but if unfortunately you were laid up for some weeks in Athens your position here would be in nowise altered. I propose if you agree that you should do contre-espionage work at Athens and doing 'de temps à autre' liaison with us.

He added that both George Lloyd* and he thought

* Lord Lloyd of Dolobran.

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

I should consider whether I might not be of more service to my country by accepting Sir Francis Elliot's suggestion to do Press work for the Legation, in which case, however, I should not be able to remain attached to G.H.Q.

Fortunately for my peace of mind this problem had already been solved by the Foreign Office's not requiring my pen.

In another letter Deedes wrote that Graves* had taken on my Newgate Calendar and was panting for fresh material. Finally he promised to find £150 a month for my work out of his own Intelligence funds at G.H.Q.

This offer was a great relief to V, who until he could muster up the determination to get Liebig moved into another sphere of utility was not knowing where to find the money for B work or contre-espionage without dipping too deeply into the funds allowed him for A work or espionage, which was after all his main business in Athens. I asked V if he had said anything yet to Liebig about my intrusion upon his activities, and he nearly nodded his spectacles off his nose in beseeching me to be careful not to let anybody suspect I had anything to do with anybody outside G.H.Q.

"Mind you," said V solemnly, "I do not wish to suggest for a moment, my dear fellow, that Liebig is likely to do anything violent ; but we cannot be too careful in our kind of work, and it will require the utmost tact to get him to see that he has really outlived his sphere of utility in Athens. In fact I do not hesitate to say," V concluded in a low voice and with an apprehensive glance over his shoulder at the closed door, "that the Germans know what he is doing. However, when you come out of here you will be able to judge his work for yourself."

But these talks with my various visitors were only very

* Sir Robert Graves, K.C.M.G.

small oases in a desert of loneliness at that clinic, and most of my time was spent in listening to the street-cries along the noisy sun-parched street below and in meditating upon the past as much as in planning for the future.

There were other letters that week-end forwarded on to me from Imbros which gave me enough to think about in the past. One of these was from Richard Gunstone, the steward of the Junior Common Room at Magdalen, from 'Gunner,' the best loved figure in the College by generation after generation of Magdalen men. I tried to paint his portait as 'Venner' in *Sinister Street*, and the old man himself was always good enough to say that it was a recognizable portrait. He first went to Magdalen as Common Room boy somewhere about 1860, became Steward of the J.C.R. in the 'seventies and did not leave until just before the war. This is how I wrote of him in *Sinister Street* :

'Gunner's office was one of the small ground-floor rooms in Cloisters, but it had long ago been converted to the present use. An inner store-room, to which Gunner always retired to make a cup of squash or to open a bottle of whisky, had once been the bedroom. The office itself was not luxuriously furnished, and the accommodation was small. A window-seat with a view of the college kitchens, a square table, and a couple of Windsor chairs were considered enough for the men who frequented Gunner's every night after hall, and who on Sunday nights after wine in J.C.R. clustered there like a swarm of bees. Gunner's own high chair stood far back in the corner behind his high sloping desk on which, always spread open, lay the great ledger of J.C.R. accounts. On the shelves above were the account books of bygone years in which were indelibly recorded the extravagances of more than thirty years of Magdalen men. Over the fireplace was a gilt mirror of Victorian design stuck round with the fixture cards of the university and the college, with notices of grinds and musical

clubs and debating societies, in fact with all the printed petty news of Oxford. A few photographs of winning crews, a book-case with stores of college stationery, a Chippendale sideboard with a glass case of priced cigars on top, and an interesting drawerful of Gunner's relics above the varnished wainscot completed the furniture. The wall-paper was of that indefinite brownish yellow which one finds in the rooms of old-fashioned solicitors, and of that curious oily texture which seems to produce an impression of great age and at the same time of perfect modernity.

Yet the office itself, haunted though it was by the accumulated personalities of every generation at Magdalen, would scarcely have possessed the magical effect of fusion which it did possess, had not all these personalities endured in a perpetual present through the conservative force of Gunner himself. Richard Gunstone had been Steward of the Junior Common Room for thirty-three years, but he seemed to all these young men that came within the fragrancy of his charm to be as much an intrinsic part of the college as the tower itself. The bearded President, the dry-voiced dons, the deer park, the elms, the ancient doors and traceries, the lawns and narrow entries, the groining and the lattices, were all subordinate in the estimation of the undergraduates to Gunner. He knew the inner history of every rag; he realized why each man was popular or unpopular or merely ignored; he was a treasure-house of wise counsel and kindly advice; he held the keys of every heart. He was an old man with florid, clean-shaven face, a pair of benignant eyes intensely blue, a rounded nose, a gentle voice and most inimitable laugh. Something there was in him of the old family butler, a little more of the yeoman farmer, a trace of the head gamekeeper, a suspicion of the trainer of horses; but all these elements were blended to produce the effect of someone wise and saintly and simple who would trouble himself to heal the lightest wounds and could rouse with a look or a gesture undying affection.

FRESH FIGS

With such a tutelary spirit, it was not surprising the freedom of Gunner's should have been esteemed a privilege that could only be conferred by the user's consciousness of his own right. There was no formal election to Gunner's: there simply happened a moment when the Magdalen man entered unembarrassed that mellow office and basked in that sunny effluence. In this ripe old room, generous and dry as sherry wine, how pleasant it was to sit and listen to Gunner's ripe old stories; how amazingly important seemed the trivial gossip of the college in this historic atmosphere; how much time was apparently wasted here between eight and ten at night, and what a thrill it always was to come into college about half-past nine of a murky evening and stroll round Cloisters to see if there was anybody in Gunner's. It could after all scarcely be accounted a waste of time to sit and slowly mature in Gunner's and sometimes about half-past nine the old man would be alone, the fire would be dying down and during the half-hour that remained of his duty, it would be possible to peel a large apple very slowly and extract from him more of the essence of social history than could be gained from a term's reading of great historians even with all the extra lucidity imparted by a course of Mr. So-and-So's lectures.

He had an endless number of stories about old Magdalen men, and the youthful habits of many distinguished men were recorded in that little office of his on the left of the stone steps leading up to the Junior Common Room. He always liked to be asked a question about some bishop or ambassador who had been at Magdalen.

"We'll look up his J.C.R. account," he would say with a chuckle that sounded like a mellow dry sherry being poured out.

And then he would produce from a top shelf a leather-bound volume of the early 'seventies and, turning up the name of the bishop or ambassador, discover that on some

night of long ago a dozen bottles of champagne had been sent up to his room.

"Oh, I remember that night well," Gunner would say. "He got terribly drunk. His friends had to put him to bed. He was a very wild fellow when he was up here."

Gunner's fund of anecdote never failed, and some of the last stories he told me were about the Prince of Wales. The King when visiting Gunner in his office had been turning over the current ledger of the year to see how the Heir Apparent's account stood, and had asked what the three-halfpence entered up every day represented. This is how Gunner related the duologue :

"Oh, that's his apple," I told the King.

"What, does he still eat an apple every morning?" said the King to me, "he's always done that."

"'Well,' I said to the King, 'you ought to tell him not to start peeling it till he gets to the bottom of the J.C.R. steps, because they're very slippery, and one day he'll slip and give his head a nasty bump and perhaps cut himself with his penknife. I've told him about it several times, but he'll never listen to me.'"

Then Gunner went on :

"The King was very nice, and he enjoyed the banana trick when I did it for him."

The banana trick had consisted of lighting a piece of paper inside a decanter and by the vacuum set up drawing a banana down inside through the neck.

"And I did Magdalen chimes for him."

One of the old man's tricks had been to attach a piece of string to the tongs for the listener to hold to his ears, while he struck the tongs with the poker and evoked what was supposed to be the sound of Magdalen chimes.

"The King was very homely. He got a good hold of the tongs. I think he enjoyed it. But the Queen was more interested in the cigars. She couldn't make out what the

FRESH FIGS

figures meant in the case with the glass top. 'Why, Ma'am,' I said, 'that's the price of each brand.'

"'Good gracious, Mr. Gunstone,' she said, 'I never knew that cigars had different prices before. I always thought all cigars were the same price.'

"Fancy her thinking that," Gunner had been wont to conclude. "I must say I was very surprised."

Here is the old man's letter which had filled that white room in the clinic with Oxford ghosts :

August 9th, 1915.

My dear Sir,

At last you have sent me an address I can use. I will now begin a letter, though there is little news to send.

You will see we are now living in the country, it is on the way to Shotover Hill. I was very fortunate to let my old house to a Parson and Wife who has a job in Oxford for 3 years.

I do not often go into College. Mr. C. R. Carter (Bursar) sent an invitation to the Wife & I to go to a Service in the College Chapel in commemoration of all of ours who have fallen in the War. We went, it was a very solemn affair. I could not sleep that night for thinking of all those fine young fellows I had parted from only a short time before. Over thirty names read out, and since then many have to be added to the list. You remember J. L. Johnston (Dean) he was up on the cricket ground with us the last time you came to Oxford. He went out at night to get in the wounded, got shot, and when his men went to find him the Germans had got him and he has not been heard of since, over a month ago now. A Doctor told my son we must give him up for lost. I gave Mr. Cookson that letter you wrote to me from the S.S. Roma in May for him to put your name and rank on his list.

He is not at College now, I hear he has work in London

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

(War work). Mr. Benecke is the only Don up, the place is deserted, only 30 undergrads out of our usual 150 came up last term. I think it will be worse in October. I went to see my old room the other day. "Oh my," what a change. The wall-paper you mention (as brownish yellow) is all gone, it is no longer like an office but a Chocolate shop in Bond Street, it may be better? But the old charm of the place is gone for ever.

I have been looking at your portrait (postcard) you look ill. What is it, the climate? On Friday last I got a letter from a Magd. man. Lt. G. M. Smyth of the 6th Loyal North Lancs, XIII Division, Mediterranean Force, who said that the heat and flies are dreadful, in Saturday's D.M. I see he is wounded. I am so sorry, he is such a jolly chap. Day after day I find Magdalen men in the list of killed and wounded, of course you see the list but you don't know they are our men unless up about your time. I saw that you had been writing to the papers some time ago. Books will have to go to the wall till the war is over and then you must write a war book. How is "Sinister Street" going? The Pre and Lady Warren are away, the last time I saw him he was very lame and old. I still keep very fit for my age. The Wife is in splendid form, she joins with me in wishing you a safe return. And with many thanks for your letter and P.C.

I am, dear Sir,

Ever yours faithfully,

Gunner.

So they had turned the old man's room into a Bond Street chocolate shop, had they? I suspected the hand of Gynes in that. Gynes had been the College messenger, and it had been generally felt that he was the only member of the College staff with a definite enough personality to carry on the great Gunner tradition. He was deeply interested in

the sporting prowess of the College, ready at any moment to criticize in his vibrant throaty voice the form of Wet Bob or Dry Bob. But he was a modernist. Golf was his real game, and it was admitted that he might have been a really great professional. Even in the first years of the twentieth century it was obvious that golf was going to destroy cricket ultimately, though at that date its destructive influence had not been reinforced by lawn tennis, which was still called 'pat-ball' and regarded with good-natured contempt as a lazy form of mild exercise. Gynes, however, was not merely a modernist in sport. He was an amateur of belles lettres and had a collection of all the so-called decadent writers of the 'nineties. The shelves of his rooms in Cowley Road had been bright with *Yellow Books* and *Savoys* and the delicate mauves and slim gilt edges of hedonist poets. Gynes had been a portent. Would he live long enough to find himself old-fashioned?

And then with a smile I was remembering the visit Gynes had once paid to Paris with Mr. Chaundy during an Easter vacation, both of them on the look out for book bargains along the left bank of the Seine. In those days Mr. Chaundy was not a famous bookseller on his own account, but managed a minority business in the High called William George's Sons of Bristol.

At the beginning of the summer term I had asked Mr. Chaundy how the visit to Paris with Gynes had passed off.

"Well, as a matter of fact, I got a bit fed up with Gynes," Mr. Chaundy replied with some bitterness in his tone, "because I found he'd been going all round Paris saying that he was Viscount Gynes and that I was his valet."

Yes, I felt sure it had been Gynes who had abolished the dingy yellowish brown wallpaper in Gunner's little office.

Enclosed in the old man's letter was a half sheet of that so familiar college notepaper on one side of which Gunner

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

had copied for me what I fancied was the first poem he had ever written :

Magdalen College,
Oxford

DESERTED

*No sound across the Cloistered quad
As daylight fades away,
No laughter borne upon the air,
No light with cheerful ray.*

*Where are the sounds of long ago
That echoed through these halls?
Nought but silence now is found
Among the old grey walls.*

*The heavy doors look sinister,
Deserted is the stair
Stilled are the steps for evermore
That used to enter there.*

On the back of this half sheet the old man had written the names of some of the killed—about forty already, a dozen of whom were contemporaries of my own. The white room in the clinic was thronged for a moment with shapes and rich with colour. . . . Leander pink, the scarlet and lilies of the Magdalen cox, Authentic blazers, vivid Rambler ties, the black and white of the Soccer team . . . the black . . . and the white room again.

I had received by the same mail a list of Oxford men now serving. Magdalen was third with 670, Christ Church and New College being first with 780 each. But then those two colleges could draw on an average of 300 undergraduates and Magdalen on no more than 160, so that proportionately Magdalen was far ahead of any. Such a figure as 670 meant

that practically every Magdalen man for twenty years was in the Navy or the Army. It had been impossible during the last months to keep pace with the casualty lists, and in this letter of Gunner's I heard for the first time of the deaths of many old friends, most of whom I had last seen in the fulness of their youth at Oxford. And to hear of them now from that dear old man, who was devoting his retirement to collecting every scrap of information he could glean from the newspapers about the careers of men for whom such a career was the last they had been expecting when they had shaken hands with him and come out for the last time from his little office to see the lawn in the middle of Cloisters glowing green in the June sunshine, was a more poignant experience than I am able to convey without seeming to be indulging in sentimental emotion. Moreover, with some bitterness of spirit, I feel that, if the war had come to an end in that autumn of 1915 (as I am reminded by a letter to my wife of this August we were all of us confidently expecting, so confidently that I was writing anxiously about the necessity of getting up the daffodil bulbs and transplanting them from Cornwall to Italy so that I might not miss their flowers when I should be home again in the Spring) the sacrifice which these contemporaries of mine had made would hardly have been appreciated. It was not until the material discomfort of the war began to afflict the civil population that there was induced a state of mind which was to respond to the obscene horrors of post-war books written with a self-pity that expressed the self-pity of their readers. Those who volunteered to give their lives and gave them without complaint are not praised in such books, lest a hint of admiration should render to war one tattered shred of the glory that was once, by women mostly, believed to enfold it. There may have been nothing heroic in the readiness of those young men of 1914 and 1915 to volunteer. There may have been nothing behind their

impulse except a desire to do the right thing, comparable in kind yet not in degree to the impulse which would prevent their wearing a black tie with tails or brown boots with a top hat. However, since none of them considered himself a hero and since none of them made a book about his sufferings, the living might spare them at least as much respect as they give to writers by whose sufferings some of us might feel more pitifully moved if they did not seem to have lavished all the pity in the world upon themselves.

“ Seeka freska ! σῦκα φρέσκα ! ”

I suppose we should just be grateful that we are still alive and still able to eat fresh figs. Perhaps our stale palates are to blame for what seems their lack of flavour.

In the next letter I opened on that hot afternoon was the news that Tom Overton had been killed at Suvla. But how had Tom Overton found himself at Suvla ? His presence there was unimaginable. It had been easy enough to picture my Oxford friends leading their men into action and being killed. Their behaviour would have been but an extension of behaviour I had often witnessed at Summer Eights or cup-ties, or with the Magdalen and New College beagles, or at grinds in the Bicester country. But my last picture of Tom Overton was of a little boy in a faded light blue smock, who had so strong a personality at seven years old that it was impossible for me to provide him in fancy with the personality developed by the school and university life that lay between 1901 and 1915. He was for me when I heard of his death at Suvla still seven years old in a faded light blue smock. And yet, some of my memories of Tom Overton were connected with soldiering. The very first picture of him that came back to my mind that hot afternoon was his presence at a sham fight between the Ware company of the First Volunteer (Hertfordshire) Battalion of the Bedfordshire Regiment and the Hertford company reinforced by the Haileybury School Corps. I was in

FRESH FIGS

command of the vanguard and expecting every moment to see the enemy's scarlet debouching from the woodland ahead. When there was no sign of them, Tom, who was naturally anxious to take part in the fighting, had been told to crawl along the bed of a dried-up water-course and try to get a glimpse of the enemy. My spy was some time away. Telling my men to keep close cover, I had strolled along the lane we were holding and had hardly turned the corner when four small Haileybury boys leapt at me with fixed bayonets and squeaked :

"Surrender your sword, sir. You're our prisoner."

By all the rules of sham warfare I certainly was, and I had to hand over my sword with as good a grace as a subaltern of barely eighteen could display in the presence of four privates whose average age was about thirteen. At that moment Tom Overton had returned from his scouting expedition ; and now in this clinic I could still see the thrust of his deeply cleft chin and the puzzled frown between his blue eyes as he heard the tale of my carelessness.

"Get away, you kid, and don't follow us about," one of my captors told him loftily.

"He's a friend of mine," I explained.

My captors looked doubtful.

"But we've got to keep you prisoner," one of them said. "There's a barn along here where I think you'll have to stay."

"Oh, I'll give you my parole," I offered airily.

The four schoolboys looked more doubtful than ever ; but none of them was bold enough to admit that he did not know what giving one's parole meant. So, as far as I was concerned, the sham fight ended in the dimness and drouth of an old barn where Tom Overton and I discussed the possibility of escape, while outside four fierce Lower School boys in scarlet marched round and round our prison with

fixed bayonets, until a distant bugle proclaimed the sham fight at an end.

So now when I heard of Tom Overton's death in action at Suvla it was no khaki-clad subaltern of the Lincolns that I pictured falling, but a diminutive figure in a light blue faded smock, with deeply cleft out-thrust chin small and shapely, who was leading his men through the aromatic scrub under the fire of Turkish guns, which he would be saying all the while were only pretend. He had been the most enchanting small boy I had known, and thinking of field and copse, of stream and spinney and lane I had explored with him and his brother Ted, older by a year, my memory went back to the events which brought me into green Hertfordshire.

I had managed to leave St. Paul's in the February of 1900 through the good offices of the doctor to whom I confided that if I had to walk once more along Hammer-smith Road, up and down which I had walked four times a day for nine years I should go mad. My younger brother had already been driven mad enough by the boredom of school to enlist at the age of just fifteen in the Imperial Yeomanry and had very nearly succeeded in getting out to South Africa before he was dragged back to a more conventional education. There must have been something in my eye which had warned the doctor that I would do anything rather than endure any longer the intolerable futility and monotony of my present existence. So, instead of going back to school, I had been allowed to restore my nervous system by two or three months at Bournemouth . . . the rhododendrons in Branksome woods . . . talking to Cardinal Vaughan and marvelling at the superb ivory of his countenance . . . tales from Colonel Sartorius of big game . . . Mafeking night and one of the guests at the Hydro coming home late and in trying to cross the glass roof of the Turkish bath to climb into his room crashing through

it . . . and after Bournemouth Switzerland . . . the darkness under the pollarded lime-trees beside the lake at Lucerne . . . the honey and rolls that tasted so good in the morning . . . Grindelwald . . . mauve violas among the melting snow and the Jüngfrau against a leaden sky . . . the chequered shade of a square in Interlaken . . . and then Geneva . . . shimmering silver in the haze of summer. It had been there I had learnt the wisdom that comes from losing all one's money at *petits chevaux*. To this day the memory of the way my last five-franc piece was raked in by the croupier will warn me against ultimate extravagance, for while waiting for a remittance I went without food for three days and slept for three nights on a bench beside the lake. After that I had spent a delightful summer feeding on peaches and salads and skim-milk cheeses, chasing butterflies all day long across the red sun-burnt soil of the Lyonnais, playing piquet with a French uncle who finally flung all the cards out of the window when I was 4,200 points up on him, and reading in Tauchnitz editions a novel a day . . . the dewy lips of Rhoda Broughton's delicious heroines . . . hard riding with Henry Kingsley . . . amazed adolescent thrills from *The Woman Who Did* and *The Yellow Aster*. . . . BALZAC and what seemed the revelation of life as it is really lived after the gardenia-scented by-ways of the decadence to which a year's previous reading had been devoted . . . my own first story written in an arbour of jasmine . . . a ridiculous story about a duel . . . the excitement of reading in the *Daily Mail* about the massacre of the Legations in Peking . . . marvellous horrors, and all of them absolutely imaginary . . . travelling south on a hot September night in a railway carriage full of provincial mayors on their way to visit the Paris Exhibition free of charge . . . the empty azure of the early morning sky over the forest of Fontainebleau seen from the windows of the train . . . a long hot dusty day

at the Exhibition . . . no room to lie down on the boat from Havre that night . . . an attempt to have a hot bath . . . the soap will not lather . . . I am bathing in warm oil which has somehow got into the bath instead of water . . . a cold douche to get rid of it . . . a long Sunday at Southampton waiting for a train into Hampshire . . . then with a heavy cold passing Responsions and taking digs in Longwall only to be told by the College authorities that I was too young at seventeen to come up to the University. To keep me out of mischief that year before Oxford I was sent to the Rev. Arnold Overton at High Cross in Hertfordshire to be coached by him for the arduous task of getting through the matriculation at Magdalen. Neither he nor I could pretend that there was any excuse for wasting much time over an examination which I could have passed with my head tied up in a sack. So I studied German with him, choosing perversely as my introduction to German literature a translation of Ibsen's *Doll's House*. The real value of that year, however, did not lie in the knowledge of German I acquired from reading *Das Puppenheim*, nor in the free verse I wrote under the inspiration of the French symbolists. The value of that year lay in watching the seasons' progress through a quiet country year in a house that was exquisitely appropriate as a stepping-stone to Oxford, and in the companionship of two delightful children, one of whom had been killed at Suvla.

" Seeka freska ! Seeka freska ! "

As I lay there, listening to those raucous cries from the dusty Athenian street, I sought to cool the present by a recollection of the green past. I was with Tom Overton looking for bullfinches' nests in the snowberry thickets beside that river to whose slow and dimpled stream the overhanging trees gave a patina as to the muscles of an old bronze . . . and a moment after I was with Tom Overton in an orchard where the red apples fell softly among the

thick moist grass, both of us armed with wooden swords, both of us wearing paper cocked hats and waiting for a party of Indians with spears of hazelwood and adorned with the cast feathers of silver Wyandottes and black Minorcas. A few years would pass. The Indians would turn into Turks, and what had been a game would become horribly real.

“ Seeka freska ! Seeka freska ! ”

The cry of fresh figs along that dusty Athenian street made fetid by excess of sunlight was a mockery ; but the words tormented the mind into conjuring from the past more visions of coolness and former peace. I was walking with the Overton boys along a road that rang like iron in the bleak January frost. When the wintry desolation was seeming too grim I could re-conjure the thrill of seeing the first silky buds of the breaking shallows like pearls along the hedgerows. Could they have ever really existed, those iron-bound roads ? But there was that snowy night of the route march when reeling with fatigue I toiled back from the drill hall, after the Company had been dismissed, towards High Cross, leaning upon my bicycle in a dream of bed, too tired to pedal it up the steep snowy hill out of Ware. Volunteering memories from the past began to throng the memory, contending with the lassitude of my body and with the gloomy meditations evoked by those letters. I was looking proudly at what must have been almost the last commission granted by Queen Victoria. I was in command of my half company which was helping to line the streets of Hertford for the solemn proclamation of Edward VII as King. I was detraining at Aldershot in command of the advance party of the battalion sent to pitch our camp in preparation for the August manœuvres, and feeling rather overweighted by my responsibilities. I was marching my men through Aldershot and trying to return correctly the ceremonious salutes of sentry after sentry as they seemed

to rush out at us like cuckoos from a clock. We were to camp in a spot known as Scrogg's Bottom, and it was seeming that I should spend the rest of the day telling the colour-sergeant to inquire of knowledgeable-looking individuals whether we were on the right road for Scrogg's confounded Bottom, and then the colour-sergeant was murmuring that he thought the men would be glad to fall out for a minute in order to obey what he described poetically as a call of nature. As I had been unable to ascertain from the drill manual the proper word of command for this business, I had told the sergeant he must arrange matters. I could hear him shouting :

"Company ! Shun ! Stand at ease ! Pile arms ! " And at last : " Fall out, men, and be quick about it ! "

No sooner had the men fallen out in what seemed a suitably bare spot than we heard an agonized cry about fifty yards away, and from a marquee in process of erection there came running a dapper little officer with a firmly wedged eyeglass, who was shouting at me to call off my men.

" I can't call them off till they've finished, sir," I had replied apologetically.

" But you must, sir," he insisted. " That's the site we've chosen for our mess tent. This is the camp of the First Volunteer Battalion of the Oxford Light Infantry, Home Counties Brigade."

" Home Counties Brigade ? " I repeated. " Why, that's our Brigade. Do you know where Scrogg's Bottom is ? It must be somewhere near here."

" No, I don't know where Scrogg's Bottom is," said the Light Infantry subaltern petulantly. " But how can we pitch our mess tent there ? "

" I'm very sorry, sir, but I couldn't know that you'd chosen this site. Colour-sergeant, tell the men to fall in at once."

And on we marched toward Scrogg's Bottom, leaving the Oxfords to find a less marshy site for their mess tent.

And then I was dozing on a sofa in our own mess tent which had been got up by round about midnight, and the corporal of the guard was waking me up to say that four drunks from the Buckinghamshire Regiment had been cutting our tent ropes and what was to be done with them.

"Put them in the guard-tent, corporal, till morning," I had commanded quickly.

But in the morning with the excitement of the battalion's arrival I had forgotten all about those offenders, and it was not until the following evening that I remembered their existence when an officer of their own battalion came round to ask if by chance we had seen four of his men who were missing.

And now I was hearing Henry Croft, the senior subaltern of my company, invite me on Sunday afternoon to take a stroll with him and see what the little boys were like nowadays. Henry Croft was then up at Trinity Hall and I had not yet gone up to Oxford ; but when we swaggered through the lines of the Public Schools Brigade, with our canes under our arms, we really did feel years and years older than the little boys. Yet the little boys were perhaps less impressed by us than we were by ourselves, for when we reached the Shrewsbury lines I heard one Salopian exclaim to another :

"My god, what damned awful side Henry Croft is putting on. I never saw anybody put on such side, did you ?"

And he was about right, for though I was trying hard to put on as much side myself it was really impossible to compete with Henry Croft. And now he is Brigadier-General Sir Henry Page Croft, a Baronet, a Member of Parliament, and all sorts of things, but whatever he may become I wager he will never put on so much side as he did that Sunday afternoon thirty years ago, when he was seeing what the little boys of his old school looked like.

And then I was toiling across Laffan's Plain, endeavouring to keep my half-company in extended order. They were the days of the Boer War, and extended order was the ruling passion of those responsible for the fortunes of the British Army.

"Why in god's name aren't your men in proper extended order, Captain Boyd?" some red-faced major would come galloping up to demand.

"Why the deuce isn't your half-company in proper extended order, Mr. Mackenzie?" the captain of my company would splutter.

"Why *don't* you keep the men in extended order, colour-sergeant," I would expostulate, for a junior subaltern knows better than to swear at his guardian angel.

"Why the blank blank don't you keep those blanking perishers over there in their proper extended order, Corporal Jones?" the sergeant would demand.

But what the corporal said to the men, and what the men said to one another about the corporal and everybody else upward as far as the Commander-in-Chief could only be printed in a book that was intended to make people grasp what a terrible thing war really is.

In the end it was always the subalterns who suffered most from extended order, because sergeants in the Volunteers were usually too fat and too elderly to run rapidly enough along the quarter of a mile of country which a half-company in proper extended order will occupy.

There was to have been a great battle at Aldershot that year, the greatest sham fight that had ever been staged. Over thirty thousand combatants were taking part in it, and that the battle in the end never took place at all had been due to myself. My half-company was on the extreme left flank and we were advancing, in extended order as usual, to meet the enemy face to face. Our objective was marked on a handkerchief map, which the wind fluttered

in every direction. By giving a half-left turn when I ought to have kept straight on, the whole army was deflected from its proper direction, and the extreme right flank just missed the enemy's extreme right. Two armies marched on away from one another for about three miles while a quantity of excited umpires galloped all over the place to try to get the two armies to turn and fight like men. But by now we were thinking more about lunch than fighting. However, it had been tiresome to carry a large number of rounds of blank cartridges for the whole of a hot August day without firing a shot, so to cheer up my men I ordered them to open rapid fire on some of the umpires at six hundred yards, and we had blazed away most of our ammunition before one of them galloped up and told us the battle was over.

After a sham fight the officers used to be gathered together and addressed by the chief umpire ; but, as the two armies had not seen anything of one another on this occasion, the chief umpire had nothing to tell us except that we had had no business to lose one another. Anyway, we should not have paid any attention to the pow-wow, because we were noting that our lunch wagon had arrived and, having been on the move since five o'clock, we were now at two o'clock ready to eat. And then the awful news had come that, although the officers' lunch had arrived, the men's dinner had not, so that we had to march all the way back to camp without so much as a drink. What a march back that had been ! It really made the heat of Athens bearable to think about it. I was remembering the way some parched bandmen had flung down their instruments in the sandy road and rushed to plunge their faces into a horse-trough by the wayside. I could see again that endless column of scarlet and grey and dark green uniforms winding wearily on through the reeking dust of a brazen afternoon. I was remembering how, when at last we had marched almost

jauntily into camp to the strains of *The Young May Moon*, we had sat with our cool drinks in the shade of the mess tent and watched superciliously from our deep wicker chairs the stragglers of the Second Volunteer Battalion limping into camp by twos and threes. We considered ourselves the crack volunteer battalion of the British Army, and could boast that of nine hundred not one man had fallen out on that grilling August day. While I was thinking in the clinic of that long grey and green and scarlet column, the beginning of it seemed to stretch much further back than the country round Aldershot and to become with distance thinner and thinner until like a strand of coloured silk it seemed to thread its way through the warp and woof of my earliest childhood. I was at school again, staring with contemptuous pity at the poor bugshooters drilling on the gravel. A miserable existence theirs, with nothing to reward them for their patriotism except release from the weekly hour of gym. Had the school corps worn a scarlet uniform, it might have attracted more of us to join; but that dull crocodile-green turn-out was discouraging. Moreover, to be attached to a regiment known as the Kensington Rifles, for all it might be the Thirteenth Battalion of the Rifle Brigade, savoured of comic opera, and not even the strident and tawdry patriotism of the first year of the Boer War could make us take the bugshooters seriously.

The British Empire had reached its glowing climax with the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria. Future historians might consider the claims of the Stop The War meeting in Trafalgar Square in September, 1899, to provide the moment when the inevitable decline began.

"Seeka freska! Seeka freska!"

Lying in that clinic with a temperature below normal, it was hard to believe that sixteen years earlier I had been a unit in the concourse of hysterical oafs who had gathered from every part of London in order to stop that Stop The

War meeting, as difficult as it is for me now, fifteen years later still, to realize that the equally absurd person lying in that Athens clinic and filled with fantastic notions about the secret-service was also myself.

There have been many famous gatherings in Trafalgar Square, but I should doubt if there was ever a larger number of stupid people gathered together in it than on that September afternoon. Not a single one of the orators who were haranguing the crowd from the pedestals of the lions had a chance of making his voice heard above the roaring of *Rule Britannia* by the audience. My companion was Guy Pears* who was going to Woolwich next term, and as an embryo sapper bursting with indignation against the unpatriotic swine who were daring to point out that war with the Transvaal might be neither judicious nor just. Among the unpatriotic swine I caught sight of McDonnell, whose tumbled red hair had nearly as much eloquence as his own eloquent tongue. McDonnell was an elder brother of M. F. J. McDonnell† who was a classmate and friend of mine at St. Paul's, and who is now the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Palestine. He too had tumbled red hair in those days and much eloquence. Guy Pears and I were shocked to see the elder McDonnell standing there between the paws of one of the lions and shaking his fist like the good Irish patriot he was at the beery exhalation of *Rule Britannia* by the mob. He had not so long left St. Paul's himself and was still up at Cambridge, and we felt as we stood there on the top of an omnibus gazing down at his expressive hair that he was involving us in a common shame. So Guy Pears snatched from its socket the little Union Jack which in those days London Road Car omnibuses carried to mark their independence of the London General Omnibus Company, and while he waved it martially to and fro he

* Col. G. B. Pears, M.C., R.E.

† Sir Michael McDonnell.

attempted to explain to the other occupants of the bus what an amount of patriotic virtue animated all Paulines except the red-headed orator preaching peace between the paws of that indifferent lion below.

"Seeka freska ! Seeka freska !"

But these memories were no more than a temporary cloud of dust obscuring the brightness of that column's array. Much farther back in the past, and beyond the murk of that Boer War which had brought as much disillusionment to the youth of my generation as the last war brought to its own generation, and as the next war will bring to a future generation, that column was still winding for my fancy. I was a child of eight at Folkestone when Shorncliffe was a word of magic power. And it was still magical, for I could fill the Athenian air with the sound of distant bugles and could smell beyond the stale reek of the sun-swept street that immemorial English seaside smell, of warm soft asphalt and fruit-stained baskets and tamarisks and salt sand. I had left the Lees behind and was walking over fields of parched and chalky herbage, in which the poppies and ox-eyed daisies grew scant and stunted, to where the white tents of Shorncliffe thrilled the sight with their promise of fatigue parties and parades and polo-playing officers, and all the varicoloured work and play of a military camp.

But now the column was winding back far beyond Shorncliffe to a review on Southsea Common, at which in some ways I was less aware of having once been present than at the famous Rochester review where Mr. Pickwick made the acquaintance of Mr. Wardle. A moment of ghostly retrospection, during which I seemed to behold red and blue troops like a Turkey carpet over the Common, and I had shrunk to such smallness that by standing on tip-toe I could just peer over the window-sill of a room on the ground floor of a small Portsmouth house

FRESH FIGS

and watch amid the sound of brass and drums scarlet soldiers, their spiked helmets glittering, go marching by to church followed by blue soldiers, whose spikes instead of being pointed ended in a little brass ball, the difference between the helmets assuming for my childish mind a portentous, an almost appalling significance of meaning, which though somehow comprehended was of course quite ineffable. And even now in that clinic I was feeling that, could I but remember a little more clearly what I had thought about those helmets as a child of three, I should solve the riddle of life as one seems to have solved it sometimes, waking from a dream. The colour of that scarlet and of that blue, as it came back to me across the years, was in remembrance so much richer than any colours I had beheld since or was ever likely to behold again that such words as scarlet and blue were a joke to describe the immortal dyes in which my childish spirit was drenched. The soldiers I saw that Sunday morning would perhaps have not long come back from fighting at Tel-el-Kebir. But what was that when in a porch sweet with honeysuckle I had sat on the knees of a veteran of Waterloo, wondering more at the look of his ancient hands than at the stories he would be telling me?

“Seeka freska! Seeka freska!”

Fresh figs indeed! And how pulpy they must have seemed to that old man mumbling of Hougoumont and Quatre Bras.

But soldiers red and blue were not all that I saw marching past those new red-brick barracks at Portsmouth. The column had turned now to a dirty drab, and I was looking back to stare after a body of men who, with shovels and picks over their shoulders, walked with a dragging gait as well they might, for they were chained in gangs. And now from forty-five years ago the lean face of one of those convicts still haunts my fancy with its expression, and I can

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

still see the weary lift of his chained leg and the aimlessness in his eyes. And it was by turning round to stare in fascination at those wretched men and at the bearded warders who marched beside them, rifles on their dark shoulders, that I walked into the wall of Portsmouth barracks and gashed my cheek deeply against one of those pointed bricks with which the poetic builder had tried to relieve the monotony of a blank wall. Plenty of colour now to remember: the scarlet of the sentry at the gate, the crude red of the new brick wall, the red flowers nodding in the bonnet of an angry nurse, and richest of all the deep crimson thunder-drops of blood upon the pavement. How ridiculous that in every rough proof of a photograph that scar should still appear the most conspicuous feature of my face! The monuments that the body rears to itself are indeed grossly pretentious.

And then at last that long column found a beginning away over in Londonderry in February, 1885, when for the first time I had become aware of soldiers in action. I had woken in my cot to hear the tramp-tramp of feet in the darkness of the midnight without, and my mother had carried me to the window. Pulling back the curtains, she had pointed to the dim forms marching past in greatcoats with fixed bayonets to guard from rescue two priests who were under arrest, and whose faces beheld in the wan rays of a street lamp filled me with compassion. I had been barely two years old, and yet when I looked back to that dim Irish midnight I could realize how deeply that scene had influenced my political sympathies, but now. . . .

“Σῦκα φρέσκα! Seeka freska!”

I had begun to weary utterly of my detention in the clinic of the waxed linoleum floor, of the white furniture, of the sounds floating in from the street below, of the pie-faced nurse and her thermometer, of reading, of killing an occasional mosquito between the pages of a book, and of the

gradually growing conviction that unless I could get hold of a more practical text-book with which to study modern Greek I might be equipped for reading the Greek newspapers, but that I certainly should never be equipped to carry on a conversation. There is much to be said against novelists, but there is this to be said for them—they do fix a language. Greece has not yet produced a sufficiently great novelist to take the δημοτική (demotike) or popular tongue and compel the nation to accept it as literature. Gaelic at the present day suffers from the same lack. The Greeks have a theory that they talk like their newspapers, which mercifully they do not. They are ashamed to face the fact that the spoken language has lost many words which they still sedulously print. You will find a baker advertising that he sells ἄρτος (artos). Yet you may go inside his shop to buy some bread and perhaps find that he does not know what you want until you ask him for ψωμί (psomi) instead of ἄρτος, and so with fishmongers and wine-merchants and many another trade. When there was a proposal to translate the Greek Testament into modern Greek there were riots in Athens, so dearly do the people cling to a pretence that they do not talk the language they really talk. Later on at Athens I secured an invaluable book called *An Echo of Spoken Greek* from which I learnt more in a week than I had learnt from other grammars and conversational manuals in a year. Greek friends of mine when they saw the volume I was studying held up dismayed hands.

“Why will you study such a book?” they asked. “That will only teach you the way the common people talk.”

And when I used to tell them that it was the way they all talked among themselves, if they would only have the honesty to admit it, they would assure me most solemnly that they had never talked like that. I believe they were speaking sincerely and that if one had taken a gramophone

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

record of their domestic speech they would have expected to hear sentences worthy of Demosthenes issuing from the horn.

“ Seeka freska ! Seeka freska ! ”

By the month of September my temperature had risen to normal, and glad I was to be out of the clinic and back in the Hotel d'Angleterre.

Readers may justifiably be thinking that from the point of view of Athenian memories it is not a page too soon. Yet could I convey how utterly bored I was with my own company except by boring my readers with it ? And they have this advantage over me that, whereas they can skip my convalescence, I could not skip that boiled rice and the legs of those chickens.

CHAPTER V

EARLY ABSURDITIES OF SECRET-SERVICE

THE first thing I did on getting out of the clinic was to make the acquaintance of Liebig, whose real name need not be disclosed. He was actually a regular officer with the rank of major, a stocky swarthy man of good Maltese family, who had been employed on secret-service work for the last nineteen years; and a strange, exotic figure he must have seemed when at intervals he took his place at the officers' mess of the old Line battalion to which he belonged. At this date he was living in the Pension Merlin, a well known Athenian boarding-house run by a Levantine Englishwoman.

When I called on Liebig that afternoon, he was sitting in his shirtsleeves writing at a desk; and in a corner of the room a plump pink-faced man with a heavy fair moustache, also in shirtsleeves, was banging away at a typewriter. Liebig's reception reminded me of an actor-manager's reception of an author who has sent him a play to read. He was naturally anxious to impress upon me that I knew nothing about writing plays, that he had in his desk all the plays he could possibly want for years to come, and that unless I had been brought to his notice by one of his backers nothing would have induced him to waste his time in giving me an interview.

Apart from there being some justification for Liebig's attitude, I never have minded and never shall mind being told that I am a hopeless novice. I fancy it must be a tribute to the exquisitely innocent expression of my

countenance which always leads people to take me under their wing and tell me how little I know about anything. If I buy an island, people write from all over the world to assure me that I have bought the very island I do not want, one which, had they known I was thinking of buying it, they would have warned me against. When I grew interested in the gramophone, people came from all over the world to tell me how little I knew about the gramophone and what mistakes I should continue to make about anything connected with the gramophone until I had had at least a quarter of a century's experience of it. Gardeners have eyed my too rapid acquirement of horticultural knowledge with disgusted suspicion and have implored me to realize that I could begin to talk about flowers when I should have had twenty years more of that hard practical experience which fills its possessor with a justifiable contempt for theory. Even when I began modestly to mention to people that I owned a Siamese cat I used to be told that I could not be expected to know anything about Siamese cats for years to come, and I would feel grateful if I was allowed to know even the difference between a Siamese cat and a Pekinese spaniel. I have only to enter the lounge of any hotel in Europe to be buttonholed by somebody who has taken pity on my apparent innocence and is determined not to allow me to go away from the place without having seen the correct sights.

So I was not surprised when Liebig made it clear that he with his nineteen years' experience of the secret-service considered my presence in Athens as an accredited emissary from G.H.Q. nothing less than a joke. At the time I may have been slightly piqued by what seemed mere professional jealousy. Fifteen years afterwards I can appreciate the joke better.

"However," said Liebig graciously, "anything you want to know in reason about my work, I'll tell you, provided of

ABSURDITIES OF SECRET-SERVICE

course you don't ask for my sources of information. I haven't given away any of my sources of information for nineteen years, and I'm not going to start now." He turned to the plump man at the typewriter. "Tucker, anything Captain Mackenzie wants to know in reason, well, you can tell him in reason; but mind, if I hear that anybody's been tapping my sources of information, there's going to be a hell of a row, and V knows as well as I do what a hell of a row there'll be. Only yesterday he asked me where I got that information about those sixty thousand rifles buried in different places among the islands, and I said to him: 'Look here, V, I've had nineteen years of this business, and you don't think I'm going to start putting down in black and white how I found out all about those rifles?' If it's of any interest to our folk that there are sixty thousand rifles hidden round the *Ægean*, let them bloody well go and dig them up; but don't let me hear any more talk of how and when and why I know about these rifles. I've told V where they are, and I've told him what it's going to cost to get hold of them. If they don't want them, they can tell me so, and let me get on with the hundred and one other jobs I've got on hand."

"Well," said I quickly, "I think Deedes would be interested to hear about these rifles. If you let me have the details I'll discuss the business with him when I go back to G.H.Q."

"Tucker can give you the results of our investigations up to date. And now I've got an important appointment, Mackenzie. So I'm afraid I must leave you. Tucker will explain anything you want to know—within reason, of course."

Liebig, who was putting on his coat as he spoke, pulled out a slip of paper from one of the pockets.

"Can you make anything of that?" he asked.

I read, written with pencil in a sprawling untidy hand on a dirty scrap of paper, the following:

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

The minerals of Mounichia cannot be explored because the wild boar brings itching to the body. Have met and talked with the commander. Compliments.

Mary the Virgin.

I readily admitted that I could make nothing at all of it.

"No, I thought you wouldn't," said Liebig. "But I can."

"And what is it all about?" I asked.

"Sources of information, my boy, sources of information. But you'll get the advantage of them, or rather G.H.Q. will. Not that they'll do anything with the information when they get it. They never do. If you ever live long enough to have nineteen years' experience of this kind of work, you'll realize that what you've been working for all those years was to accumulate enough paper for some damned fellow sitting in an office to give an impression that he had done enough work to deserve promotion. But I mustn't waste any more time gossiping with you, Mackenzie," Liebig wound up, and putting his hat on he hurried toward the door, by which he paused for a moment to fix the second-in-command with those dark bilious eyes of his.

"Tucker," he said, "if You Know Who calls here at the time we arranged, tell him I'll see him You Know Where at seven sharp."

"All right, Major."

When the front door of the Pension Merlin had safely slammed behind his chief, Tucker lit a cigarette and sank down exhausted into an armchair.

"He's quite a nice fellow really, Liebig," he sighed. "But between him and V it's beginning to get on my nerves."

I asked if he was any good at his job.

"Well, I think he'd be very good in Malta," said Tucker. "And which is where he's done most of his work. But he

made a mistake by using Maltese agents here. They're always quarrelling with the others. Well, the fact is he doesn't know this part of the world, and between you and I old Max doesn't really give him a chance."

"Old Max? Who's he?"

"Oh, that's what Liebig calls Major —. He's V for military information, but Max for contre-espionage."

I took an immediate liking to Tucker. There is often an inclination among thin men to find spiritual comfort in the society of fat men. The classic instance is the companionship of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza. Charles Tucker was the best tempered man I have met in my life, and he had for a fat man an immense amount of energy. His father had had a sanitary engineer's business in Constantinople, and he was at the present time a refugee in Athens with the rest of the family, of which Charles was the eldest son. Although Tucker spoke Turkish, Greek, and French as fluently as he spoke English, there was nothing in his exterior to suggest the Levantine Englishman. He was typically the genial Cockney business man with a comfortable home at Ealing and a pride in his chrysanthemums. His cheeks were as pink as the eglantine, his full fair moustache was Saxon to the last hair. I have called him fat; but though there was not an angle in his body he was not really more than plump. His main object in life was to feel that things were going smoothly and easily. His chief accomplishment was driving horses. His defects sprang from the qualities that made him such a good companion. He was apt to be too pliant and too supple. A downright 'no' would have saved him and me many a difficult moment. We shall see Tucker on so many queer occasions during the next two years that he will be able to reveal his personality in action without too much preliminary analysis. At the present moment, good-natured creature though he was, the strain of being at the beck and call of Liebig and V simultaneously

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

was beginning to overwhelm him. I divined that beneath that large moustache a baby's lips were inclined to droop in a pathetic appeal to be rescued by me. V had been relying a good deal on Tucker to recruit among the refugees agents for dispatch into Turkey, and he still regarded Tucker as merely lent to Liebig for the work of contre-espionage. Tucker's *nom de guerre* in the organization was Mr. George Baden, which had been shortened to B.

"It's B this and B that," Tucker complained that afternoon, "till I don't know whether I'm standing on my head or my heels. Well, in fact it's chronic."

I did not know Tucker well enough yet to suggest that, so gently rotund was his form, others beside himself might sometimes wonder whether he was standing on his head or on his heels.

"What do you think V took into his head to do to me last month with the blessed thermometer at well over a hundred in the shade?"

"I can't guess."

"Why, he got into his head that the Huns were shadowing the Refugees' Office, and I was sent a note forbidding me to show my nose in Academy Street. Well, I was rather pleased, to tell the truth; but the very next day I got a note to say I was to meet V at four o'clock sharp by the fourth tombstone in the second alley to the right off the main alley through the cemetery. You know where the cemetery? Well, it's the hottest place in Athens. I got there at four o'clock, sweating like crumbs and waited by the blessed fourth tombstone. No sign of V anywhere. I hung about for an hour till there was a crowd of kids all round me waiting to see if I was going to dig a grave, and it wasn't till half-past five I saw V coming along, staring straight in front of him with those big smoked goggles of his and carrying that silver-mounted malacca cane. I was just going to speak to him when he growled at me through

his teeth without turning his head to left or right. 'Follow ten paces behind me for another hundred paces without appearing to recognize me.'

"So V and I marched along, one behind another, and about a dozen kids chattering after us. After we'd walked the hundred paces V swung round, and still without looking at me muttered: 'Follow me another hundred paces back, and then fifty paces to the left.' 'Look here, Major V,' I began. 'Don't speak to me! Don't speak to me,' he just absolutely hissed at me. Well, after we'd walked round that blessed cemetery, one behind the other, for about a quarter of an hour, V suddenly called out: 'Hullo, Baden, I didn't see it was you.' And then he started shaking hands with me as if I'd been dropped down in front of him out of a balloon. 'Look here, Major,' I said, for I was beginning to feel a little ratty what with hanging about all that time in the heat and the chattering of those blessed kids, 'I've been in this blessed cemetery since four o'clock,' I said. 'What are you thinking of, calling me Major?' V spluttered. He was choking with nervousness and eyeing the kids all round us through his goggles as if they were a lot of budding Hindenburgs. 'I'm astonished you shouldn't have learnt a little caution by this time, Baden.' And with that he came close up to me and whispered in my ear: 'You don't think there's anybody hiding behind any of these tombstones, do you?'"

As Tucker told me this, there came to my mind Tenniel's picture of Humpty-Dumpty leaning over to be whispered to in *Alice Through the Looking Glass*.

"'Well,' I said, 'you chose the cemetery.' 'I know I did, Baden, I know I did. And I think I've chosen wrong. So follow after me without saying any more till we get to the entrance, and I'll take the right hand turning and you'll take the left, and then we'll meet again as if by accident.' 'But if you turn to the right and I turn to the left we shan't

meet at all,' I told him. 'Don't start arguing with me here,' V began to splutter again. 'Can't you see we're collecting a regular crowd round us?' And with this he shot off, glaring in front of him through his goggles. The kids couldn't make up their minds whether to follow him or me at first, but in the end half of them followed V and the other half stuck to me."

"And did you meet V again?" I asked.

"Not that afternoon," said Tucker. "But I got a note the next day to call at Academy Street the same as usual."

Further talk about V's eccentric lines of communication was interrupted by the sly opening of the door, and the entrance of a most unpleasant-looking individual, a tall tallowy creature dressed in the extreme of Mediterranean dandyism, with crimped hair, thick lips, cod's eyes, and a long narrow head.

"Oh, is that you, Byron?" said Tucker. "The Major's just gone out. Have you any news for us?"

The visitor nervously moistened with a cigarette-stained tongue his thick red lips and looked furtively round at the door and the window.

"You needn't be afraid, Byron," said Tucker. "You're among friends here."

The conversation was in French, and the creature who was known as Byron said in a tinny Levantine accent that he would rather tell what he had to tell to Monsieur Liebig only.

"How are you getting on with our friend the Baron?" Tucker asked cheerily, at which the new-comer, turning his cod's eyes on me, gulped with dismay. Then muttering that he would call again later in the evening he squirmed toward the door, where he stopped to ask if it would be convenient for Monsieur Tucker to let him have one hundred francs on account. Tucker could never help being expansive when it was a question of paying out money.

He at once took the key from his pocket and unlocked the door of a safe standing in a corner of the room.

"Sign a receipt for it, please," he said in an important and businesslike tone of voice, and when that tallowy libel on a great poet sat down to sign his name with an elaborate calligraphy I noticed that the nails of his little fingers had been allowed to grow a full inch and were trimmed to loathsome points.

"What disgusting finger-nails!" I commented when the creature had gone.

"Oh, they often grow the little finger-nail long out here. It's a sign to show they've never done any manual labour."

The finger-nails of the creature called Byron haunt me to this day. He was employed by me for a short time, and I am still uncomfortably aware of him leaning over my shoulder and pointing out the juicier bits of his information. I used to feel physically sick, and would have to rise from the table to avoid hearing the scrape of those genteel talons over the paper.

"Liebig thinks a good deal of that blighter," said Tucker. "He's working in Baron Schenck's office. Personally I think he's rather a swine, and I don't believe his information is any good."

"It's possible, isn't it," I suggested, "that Schenck is employing him to find out something about us?"

"Well, if he is," said Tucker, "God help him!"

"Why? What machinery have you for dealing with treacherous agents?"

"Oh, I wasn't thinking of Byron, I was thinking of poor old Schenck. God help *him*, if all he gets out of Byron is what Byron can tell him about Liebig. Look here, Captain Mackenzie, I tell you without a joke and speaking absolutely straight as between ourselves, this show as it's run at present isn't worth paying twopence to find out about. It's getting more and more difficult to get suitable fellows for

Turkey, and when we do get them in they're finding it more and more difficult to get any information out. And if the Bulgarians come in against us, as I've no doubt they will, it's going to be more difficult than ever. In fact the only man who's likely to get anything then is Heathcote-Smith at Mytilene. Still, I don't want to crab the A side of the show except that I don't want to have anything more to do with it. Well, I can't get the men away any more, and V blames me. You'd think to hear him I wasn't trying." Beneath the heavy blond moustache one felt that baby lips were beginning to droop again, and there was a perceptible break in Tucker's light tenor. "There's another thing," he continued, "V promised to get me a commission, and every time I remind him about this blessed commission he puts me off and says he thinks it'll hamper my freedom. Well, now, Captain Mackenzie, it's all very fine, but a fellow doesn't like people to think he's just loafing about in Athens instead of joining up. It's not of course as if I could wear the uniform here and do anything with it. Still, it would be a satisfaction for me afterwards to be able to say I *had* held a commission, and it would shut people's mouths if they started asking me what I was doing amusing myself in Athens during the war. The last time I spoke to V about it, I told him straight I'd rather take the first boat home and enlist if I was going to hang about here the way I'm doing now."

I promised Tucker that I would urge his claims strongly to V, and suggested that if objections were raised to giving him the executive curl he might be granted at any rate an assistant-paymastership in the R.N.V.R.

"Well, I wish you would, Captain Mackenzie," said Tucker. "I assure you it would put new heart in me. But to come back to what I was saying about this show. It isn't that I want to crab old Liebig, but he really doesn't understand this place. He's taken a house now in the

middle of a big stretch of waste ground right up the Patissia road, and every blessed time he makes an appointment to meet a friend there he think it's too far for him to go and sends me instead. I'm sick of being sent trapesing over there at two in the morning every other day, and when I get there finding as often as not the friend hasn't turned up. Now, if you had the B side of this show, I reckon we could build up a nice little organization and do a bit of good. As things are now we're just a blooming laughing-stock. What I say is either do things thoroughly or don't do them at all."

Armed with a number of facts about the working of the B side of Intelligence work in Athens I went round later in the afternoon to see V himself, and give him my impressions.

"What you tell me, my dear fellow," said V, eyeing me solemnly across the desk through his great horn-rimmed spectacles, "coincides exactly with what I have been telling myself about Liebig. He is a good fellow. C considers him one of the smartest men he has, but Athens is *not* the right place for him. Still, I don't think I can do anything at present. I must wait at any rate until I know if you will be free to devote your attention to this business of contre-espionage, which will of course become more and more important as time goes on. But I shall write to C and suggest that Liebig, who is a thoroughly good fellow, might perhaps be . . . however, we can do nothing until we hear definitely about your future."

I now brought up the question of Tucker's commission ; but V shook his head.

"I *don't* like the idea of a commissioned officer doing the work here that B is doing. It might involve us with the Greek Government, and the last thing we want, when the political situation is as delicate and uncertain as it is now, is to involve ourselves unnecessarily with the authorities. I think, if you don't mind, I would rather not press for a

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

commission for B till the situation clears. Later on, perhaps, I'll see what can be done. But for the present I should be very much obliged if you would discourage the notion. B is a good fellow, but he is very indiscreet, and nearly involved me in a most awkward business at the cemetery the other day. He actually sprang up from behind a tombstone, shouting: 'Good afternoon, Major,' at the top of his voice. No, I really don't think he ought to have a commission. At any rate, not just at present."

For the next five or six weeks V tried to think of some way by which he could eliminate Liebig from Athens without hurting his feelings. Then in the middle of October he sent for me to go round and see him at his office. When I was seated at the other side of his desk, V, his whole frame seeming to strain and quiver with the weight of his responsibility, pulled out a small drawer and took from it some small pieces of paper which he pushed across to me.

"That is all I have had in from Liebig during the last week," he said.

I read through some scrappy notes, too vague to be of the least use to anybody. They were mere scraps of gossip about obscure individuals in Athens, with no indication about the trustworthiness of the source and no suggestion that any steps were being taken to probe the information more fully. On the last sheet of paper, however, I read:

Dear Max,

I was in my hiding place before the meeting started, but when I saw pistols on the table I dare not move round and my cold prevented me from hearing better. . . . Then followed a fantastic description of various members of the German Legation who were alleged to have been present at this gathering, with scraps of absurd conversation. The account finished thus:

I do not propose to give any particulars about the place of

ABSURDITIES OF SECRET-SERVICE

meeting as I propose to go there again, and this is a risky business, but I am morally convinced that these people have Englishmen in their employ. If you give me a free hand I shall round them up or get blotted out. Please note I do not speak from ear-say (sic.) I was present at this meeting although I was behind the door and I am convinced they are getting information straight from Englishmen.

"L" October 13th, 1915.

I put the paper down and looked at V.

"It sounds like a cheap film," I said.

"You think it's all quite imaginary?" he asked.

"Just a lie," I said.

"Well, I don't like to think that Liebig is deliberately inventing," said V. "I don't like to think that about anybody," he repeated earnestly. "But I am bound to agree with you, Z, that this does not ring true. Still, I cannot do anything in a hurry. However, I shall certainly write to C this week and suggest that, if he has any job in view for which the abilities of a man like Liebig might be usefully employed, I might be able to spare him. But of course I couldn't possibly insist. You will appreciate that, I am sure. And it wouldn't do for Liebig to think that I wanted to get rid of him. There is nothing more dangerous in a job like ours than to let a man who holds a position like Liebig think you want to get rid of him. I am sure you will understand that, Z, and carry on for the present along your own lines, keeping me in touch with what you are doing and not interfering, of course, in any way with what Liebig is doing."

I had hoped, when V showed me those ridiculous scraps of sensational information, that at last he intended to take some definite steps about Liebig, who was by now using his agents more to find out what I was doing in Athens than what the enemy was doing.

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

"I suppose you realize what he means by these Englishmen in the employ of the Germans?" I asked.

"I have told him to give me further particulars," said V. "If you look, my dear fellow, you'll see that I've underlined that bit about Englishmen in blue pencil and written 'further particulars required.'"

"Well, he's obviously suggesting that Tucker and I are working with the other side."

"Oh no, I think you're exaggerating."

I saw that it was no use arguing, and went away from Academy Street rather depressed. There were moments when V's charity was exasperating. However, the very next day I had a message to say that he wanted to see me urgently, and when I arrived I found him in a state of indignant agitation. He was so indignant that he forgot to refer to Liebig by his *nom de guerre*.

"Good god," he exclaimed, "what do you think — has just told me? He has actually been in here and told me that he has made arrangements to have a man assassinated because he had given him some bad information. Good god, such a man isn't safe! Imagine what will happen here in a minute if Liebig goes about arranging to have people assassinated. I never heard anything like it in all my experience. He must go at once. I've sent a telegram to C to say that I am sending him to Salonica on a matter of urgent importance, and I'm writing C by this mail to ask him to find a post for him away from the Mediterranean altogether. Of course, I shan't tell C anything about this appalling project of Liebig's to go about having people assassinated like this. He will understand I shouldn't send him to Salonica and ask to have him recalled from there without strong reasons for doing so."

Liebig's announcement of his method for disposing of treacherous agents really did drive V into action. Four days later he said 'good-bye' to me before setting out for Salonica.

"I shan't be there long," he told me, "I've asked to rejoin my regiment. I'm sick of the secret-service. I've not had nineteen years of it, Mackenzie, to be told by an old woman like Max of the same rank as myself that I've got to run it like a curate. 'Is this war?' I asked Max. 'Or is it a blessed mothers' meeting?'"

"I think you rather upset poor Max by telling him you were going to have that fellow put out of the way."

"Well, what else did he expect me to do with him?" Liebig asked indignantly. "Good lord, my dear man, when you've had nineteen years of the secret-service *you* will realize that there is only one answer to some swine, and that is a knife between the ribs. Well, I'm not sorry to leave Athens. It's too quiet for me here."

Liebig vanished from Athens, and after a week in Salonica he rejoined his regiment. As far as I remember, he was later on given a contre-espionage job in Malta, which no doubt he ran most capably. He left behind him a few incomplete dossiers and scraps of gossip about suspected individuals. He also left behind him Byron, who by no means relished the obvious incredulity of Tucker and myself compared with what must have seemed to him the pre-Adamite trustfulness of Liebig. Had the latter remained in Salonica, Byron was to have joined him there. I soon grew tired of paying out money to such a worthless rascal and was on the point of sacking him, when he told me that Baron Schenck had made him a definite offer to do espionage for him in Egypt and suggested that I should give him the opportunity of swindling his employer. The slimy brute evidently hoped to secure for himself a comfortable existence for the rest of the war at the expense of Schenck and myself, and the mobilization of the Greek Army made Alexandria sound a safer and pleasanter abode than Athens, although he was technically a Russian subject. I

decided to be quit of Byron for good and all, and at the same time spoil his chance of ever being employed again by the other side. So I arranged with Cauchi . . . with Cauchi? But of course, nothing has been said yet about Cauchi.

Cauchi had arrived in Athens a few days after I came out of the clinic. The first news I heard of him was when V sent for me to say that C was sending out from London a man who he hoped would be just the right person to employ on contre-espionage work in Athens. His father had been a Maltese who had married a Salonica Jewess. He was said to speak a dozen languages and to have done a good deal of detective work in America.

"This sounds a most invaluable fellow," said my Chief, goggling down at Cauchi's testimonial spread before him on the desk. "The only thing is, I do wish he wasn't a Maltese. I *don't* like the idea of employing two Maltese at once in Athens."

While V was saying this, I was thinking of the ribald old puzzle of trying to make a Maltese cross with five matches, the solution of which, since this book is not written by a conscientious pacifist, I do not feel at liberty to print.

"I think, if you don't mind, Z," my Chief went on, "I'll put him directly under you at once and not tell Liebig anything about his being sent out, because I really do not like the idea of two Maltese engaged in the same city. In a job like ours we simply must not neglect any precaution. I don't want to interfere in the least with your control over Cauchi. He is under your orders, my dear fellow. Absolutely under your orders. Still, I would suggest that for the present at any rate and until something definite is settled about Liebig's future Cauchi should remain down at the Piræus. You must think out some suitable occupation for him, which will conceal what he is really doing and . . .

by the way, what are we going to call him ? We can't call him C of course."

I should have taken advantage of that note of reverence in V's voice, when he alluded to the Chief of the secret-service, to find out just exactly who C was and the constitution of his organization. He might have had scruples about telling me, because by this time the work he was doing had begun to prey so much on V's nerves that a direct question like that might have shocked him into incoherence. Yet if he had told me then exactly what was the position of the C organization in regard to the Foreign Office, the Admiralty, and the War Office he and I might have been spared many misunderstandings later on and much departmental strife might have been avoided. However, the petty pride of etiquette kept me from asking any questions about C, and V's self-hypnotism by the abracadabra of the secret-service had reached such a point that he could no longer be simply frank about anything.

"We'll call Cauchi Clarence," said I, for that was the first name beginning with C which came into my head, and it would perplex one of those charlatans who pretend to discover in word-association an infallible guide to a human being's state of mind to extract any theory about mine from my choice of Clarence on the spur of the moment.

The next operation was one of those in which V revelled. With shaking hands he drew from an envelope a torn piece of paper.

"You will identify Cauchi with that when he arrives. He will have the piece of paper which matches it, if," said V goggling, "if he really is the man we are expecting."

That anybody who had once seen Cauchi should ever have supposed that his unique appearance could be assumed even by the greatest impersonator imaginable was ridiculous, and it seems incredible to me now that, when I met him in a squalid Piræus hotel on that hot September

afternoon, I did not shout with laughter as we solemnly matched our pieces of paper. Yet so much was I under the enchantment of the kind of mystery that appealed so deeply to V that I actually kept my piece of paper as a precious souvenir of life as it is really lived in the secret-service, and it lies before me as I write these words, in shape similar to the half of one of Weldon's paper patterns for a Peter Pan collar.

I found the new agent in a bedroom at the top of a fly-blown little hotel. A great oval figure rose from the bed when I entered and crossed the floor with a heavy sliding motion to greet me. We matched the pieces of paper. Then he offered me a hot damp hand, and I heard for the first time that richly larded polyglot voice, saw those big dark animal's eyes gazing into mine, saw that immense hooked nose, that sleek bulk and luculent hair, and smelt that mixture of perspiration and musk. If I was under the sway of the mysterious enchantments of the secret-service, Cauchi was absolutely drugged by them. Owing to the fact that he had arrived early that morning and that he had gone straight to his hotel, where he had remained locked in his bedroom all day, the bedroom itself being close under the roof had by the time I called on him in the afternoon achieved a frowsty heat which would have made a Lascar stoker blink. In the hot room at a Turkish bath one may see stout bald-headed old buffers oozing away with nothing to cover them but a small towel. In a similar temperature Cauchi was wearing a thick blue serge suit, a khaki flannel shirt, and no doubt heavy woollen underclothing beneath. By the time I reached him there were two dark stains of perspiration even on his coat, and his trousers were clinging to his legs like the draperies of a Royal Academy nymph.

"For god's sake open the window," I gasped.

Cauchi looked at me severely from those great dark animal's eyes.

"I don't think we ought to open the window," he said in that voice, which to call unctuous is to libel with an easy epithet. Anybody who has watched a cook skimming the fat from a richly bubbling stockpot and shaking it from the spoon into a bowl will have a faint idea of the kind of way the voice of Cauchi seemed to be dipped out of his inside and flung away like a piece of superfluous fat.

"But why not open a window?" I murmured.

"If you take the responsibility, Captain," said Cauchi. "I'll open the window. But if we're overheard I'll accept no responsibility."

"We'll risk it," I decided, looking out at an expanse of brazen sky above the huddled roofs.

The entering air seemed to fill Cauchi with sudden energy, for he dived under the bed and displayed an enormous and strangely nodulous behind of blue serge. Presently he emerged with a sack.

"Any chance of wearing these?" he asked.

I looked at the sack in bewilderment.

"It's my sergeant's uniform. It's the old uniform I was wearing when I got a Hun's bayonet through my arm at La Bassée."

He rolled up his sleeve and showed a long livid scar on the forearm.

"That's why I'm here now," he told me solemnly. "Colonel French* saw me when I came out of hospital and told me to stand by for work which required courage of a high order."

Cauchi pulled a pompous and complacent cork with his tongue at this point to express as modestly as he could that he had been compelled to reveal to Colonel French the extent of his valour.

"Courage of a high order," he repeated, "and an ability to keep his mouth shut."

* Col. C. N. French, C.M.G., C.B.E.

Here Cauchi protruded a large tongue across which he slowly drew a thick and grubby forefinger.

"Is that what you did to Colonel French?" I asked.

"They might cut my tongue out, Captain," he explained without a twinkle of humour in those sombre eyes, "but they wouldn't get a word out of me. Courage of a high order and an ability to keep his mouth shut," he repeated in the heavy monotone of a testimonial to himself which he had learnt by heart. "And fluency in languages," he continued. "So I told him I could speak French, German, Turkish, Arabic, Italian, Spanish and Greek the same as I could speak English. Besides a good smattering and able to get along in Dutch and Norwegian, and say chin-chin and suchlike in Serbian, Bulgarian, Russian and Roumanian. So he sent me round to see Captain Spencer in Whitehall Court, and Captain Spencer told me to report out here to the bearer of a piece of paper which would fit a piece he had given me. You know Captain Spencer, of course?"

"Very well," I declared, though I had not the slightest idea who he was. "And you went to Whitehall Court?" I pressed.

In a few minutes I had learnt from Cauchi what I had never ventured to ask V, which was that the headquarters of the secret-service were in the two top flats of 2, Whitehall Court, not quite inappropriately just above the Authors' Club. I suspected that Captain Spencer was C himself, but it was to be some time yet before I found out any more about that mysterious figure. Still, I had been able to extract enough about Whitehall Court from this new secret agent to leave me doubtful of that ability to keep his mouth shut which had recommended him to Colonel French. Unaware of his indiscretion, Cauchi himself was gazing like a regretful mooncalf at the sack containing his sergeant's uniform.

ABSURDITIES OF SECRET-SERVICE

"I'd like to have had a chance of wearing the old rags once again," he sighed. "When a fellow's faced death like what I have in an old kit, he doesn't want to forget all about it. So I brought my old khaki pals out here with me. They won't hurt anybody underneath my bed, and who knows? There may be a chance of wearing them out here sometime. Well, here goes with them for the present."

The owner of the uniform wiped an oily tear from the corner of his eye and dived under the bed again. This time I discovered that what I had taken for bony excrescences were actually pistols he was carrying in his hip pockets.

"I see you're armed."

Cauchi emerged from beneath the bed at this with the expression of a bear who has been offered a bun.

"I've been followed all the way from London," he announced portentously. "I say nothing. I don't accuse nobody at Whitehall Court. But I have my own thoughts. And from what I can make out the Huns knew I was being sent out here. That won't keep me from doing my duty, Captain. A chap doesn't need to be at La Bassée to die for his country."

"Well," I told him, "you'd better leave the pistols with the uniform for the present. You must remember we are working here in a neutral capital, and that it might be embarrassing if the local police chose to make themselves unpleasant. Major V would be extremely annoyed if he heard you were carrying pistols about with you."

Cauchi shook his head pessimistically. To take his mind off the danger he was evidently fancying for his own future I told him that his work at present would not involve him in the slightest risk. Should we have occasion to send him on a dangerous secret mission, that would be a different matter.

"For the present all you have to do is to keep your eyes

open and report to me anything of interest that comes your way during the day. For the present you'd better have as your apparent object for being here business as a commercial traveller. What business experience have you ? ”

I now found out that Cauchi had a couple of brothers in Salonica who were shipping agents, and that Cauchi himself after being educated in a commercial school at Zurich had been employed as a supercargo. That being the case, it would be idle for him to masquerade round the Piræus, since sooner or later he would inevitably be recognized by somebody.

“ The best thing you can do,” I told him, “ is to be perfectly frank about yourself. You can apparently be on the look out for business for your brothers. Write out your reports as clearly as possible, date them carefully, but do not sign them with your own name. You can call yourself Clarence. The reports should be put into a sealed envelope and left for Mr. George Baden at this address.”

I gave him the address of a house which Tucker used for correspondence.

“ Did you say I was to sign them Clarence ? ” he asked, smacking his lips in approval of the name chosen. “ C-L-A-R-E-N-S ? ”

I corrected his spelling, and he produced from his pocket a large pencil, the tip of which he licked with a slow relish as a buffalo might lick salt. After this he solemnly inscribed his *nom de guerre* in a note-book.

“ Is that O.K. ? ” he inquired, showing me ‘ Clarence ’ written down in a large clear angular upright hand.

At my nod he replaced the note-book and the pencil in his pocket, accompanying the action with a click of the tongue like a cork being pulled from nothing smaller than a jeroboam of champagne.

A day or two after this Tucker, who was already beginning to feel elated at the prospect of being released from the

ABSURDITIES OF SECRET-SERVICE

double tyranny of Liebig and V, and who in moments of elation always became even more expansive than usual, announced to me that he had set Clarence up at the Piræus in a greengrocer's shop. Tucker was beaming with such enthusiasm at the ingenuity of the camouflage he had designed for the new agent that I hardly had the heart to observe that Clarence would have as much chance of being taken for a cauliflower as for a greengrocer.

"Ah, but the beauty of it is, Captain Z, that his shop is exactly opposite the German Consulate. That was my idea."

"But if I were the German Consul, Tucker, and I saw Clarence selling lettuces to the inhabitants of the Piræus just outside my front door I should ask for the protection of a gun-boat."

"Now, don't worry, Captain Z," Tucker begged with one of those emotional gestures by which he would sometimes reveal the Levantine conservatory in which his heart of oak had grown too lush. "You'll see everything will be quite all right."

Some days after this while I was sitting over a cup of coffee in the Panhellenion, one of the big cafés by Omonia Square, I noticed a stir among the idlers in that centre of Athenian life. Looking up to see what was exciting their curiosity, I beheld Clarence standing in the main entrance and rolling his eyes at every table in turn, his arms folded grimly.

"*Regarde, Marguerite,*" a French girl at the next table exclaimed to her companion. "*Voilà le grand policier anglais dont je t'ai parlé hier. On dit qu'il est merveilleux. Quel type! Il va dépister tous ces sales espions boches. J'en suis très contente.*"

On my taking the first opportunity to remonstrate with Clarence for such idiotic affichage of himself he made a Mediterranean gesture of despair.

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

"I can't help it, Skipper," he told me. "There's something about me which frightens them. Wherever I go I hear 'em whispering that I'm the big detective who's been sent out here to clean up the Huns. It's not my fault. I told you I was being shadowed all the way from London. Skipper," he concluded, gazing passionately into my eyes, "there's a leak in the show, and you ought to know about it."

I gave up. There was no longer any object in pretending that Clarence was not connected with Intelligence work, though I decided that in spite of his absurdity he could still earn his salary. Indeed, by this time I had realized that in a city of the size of Athens it would be impossible to achieve secrecy by the usual means of keeping oneself hidden or pretending to be something one was not. Such methods in Athens would be the methods of the ostrich who thinks himself hidden when he buries his own head. I made up my mind to create a focus of publicity, and under cover of that publicity hope to achieve a measure of secrecy. Only that afternoon I had met at tea Captain Staichos, a son-in-law of General Dousmanis, and himself a prominent member of the General Staff. And Captain Staichos had asked me if our people in Academy Street had not recently been finding it much more difficult to get any reliable information out of Turkey.

"Our people in Academy Street?" I repeated.

"Yes, yes," he replied with a smile. "The Refugees Commission."

So much for V's hope of concealing the reason for his presence in Athens by putting his office opposite the offices of the Greek General Staff.

To come back to the plan for getting rid of Byron and rendering him innocuous. The house off the Patissia Road which Liebig had taken was unsuitable as a rendezvous for secret meetings, because it could only be ap-

ABSURDITIES OF SECRET-SERVICE

proached by half made roads over a large expanse of wasteland, in the middle of which Liebig's house stood like a lonely hen-coop. The result was that anybody turning aside from the traffic of Patissia Road was more than usually noticeable as he picked his way across the rubbish and rubble and waded through the thick dust toward the house. One advantage in choosing a lonely and isolated position as a rendezvous for agents is that, though it may be difficult to reach it unobserved, it is equally difficult for the other side to shadow the inmates without exposing their interest. A rendezvous in a busy street is much easier to reach unobserved; but it is difficult to be sure that it is not compromised, because it is also easier for the other side to watch. In a city like London secret meetings can be arranged with impunity; but in a city like Athens, the population of which in 1915 was not much over two hundred thousand, the problem of avoiding the vigilance of the enemy was almost insoluble. There was a scarcity of motor vehicles, so that one had to drive in tumbledown hackney carriages of the victoria type, and since no Athenian horse seemed capable of going up the slightest incline except at a snail's pace, it was fairly easy for anybody on foot to follow even a carriage. There were always the trams of course; but nothing is easier than to follow a man in a tram. So long as the lease of Liebig's house was on our hands, we made the best of it by letting Clarence use it, and we were satisfied that his conspiratorial figure lumbering across that wasteland as cautiously as one of the great pachyderms toward its drinking-hole occupied the attention of at least half a dozen of the Greek secret police every day, while it infected them with the notion that we were even more stupid than they had thought we were. It was certainly an ideal house in which to play the little comedy we had staged for Byron. As a preliminary I borrowed from V the services of his stenographer, whose real

name I shall suppress, but who was a prim little clerk, not even yet habituated to the effect of the war on the routine of workaday existence. He had, I think, been employed by some business firm in Constantinople; but Constantinople had had no more influence over his imagination than the White City upon a clerk in Shepherd's Bush. His conception of work was something which was begun at a regular hour in the morning, and which finished at the same hour every afternoon.

"Now, Mr. Jones," I said, "what I want you to do this evening is to take down in shorthand the conversation which you will hear going on between me and an agent whom I suspect of trying to betray us."

I looked a little anxiously at Jones, for I could not detect the slightest response in his eye to what I had supposed might be a welcome relief from typing out the presumed whereabouts of Turkish regiments.

"I see," he murmured coldly. "Will you be very long?"

"I don't know how long we shall be."

Jones looked injured.

"Major — said you would not require me after half-past eleven, or at latest twelve."

"I'm afraid I can't say just how long I shall want you, Mr. Jones; but as we cannot start till ten o'clock, I may have to keep you a bit later than that. Anyway, I think you'll find it rather interesting work."

Jones made no comment.

"I shall ask my questions in English," I went on. "Then Tucker will translate them into Greek, and translate the agent's replies to my questions. So I think you'll have plenty of time to get the English questions and answers down correctly. The only trouble is that of course you'll have to be hidden."

"Hidden?" Jones repeated in accents of depressed astonishment.

"Why, yes," I told him enthusiastically, "for naturally the agent mustn't have the slightest idea that everything he says is being committed to paper."

"I see," said Jones doubtfully. "But with regard to this hiding, what steps precisely are you proposing to take?"

"Well, we shall have to manage something at the house. So perhaps if you could get down there at half-past nine instead of ten, that would give us more time."

"By half-past nine?" Jones repeated as doubtfully as ever.

"You've nothing else to do to-night?" I asked.

"No, I've not exactly got anything to do," Jones admitted. "But Major — very seldom keeps me at the office after seven o'clock, and my wife is accustomed to me being in of an evening. She's inclined to be a little nervous."

"Then I'm very much obliged to you for your help."

"I couldn't very well refuse Major — when he made such a favour of it," Jones responded discouragingly.

"Still, I think you'll enjoy the evening," I insisted.

But Jones said nothing, and there was no glimmer of response in his eyes to suggest that he shared my optimism.

Clarence had been entrusted with the duty of escorting Byron to his doom, and I had no doubt that by the time the great detective had led him through the dust and rubbish of that waste ground Byron would be feeling that he was in the grip of the Inquisition itself.

When I reached the house, which was a jerry-built two-storied affair of six rooms, I found Tucker in the parlour beaming genially at a table on which were set half-a-dozen bottles of whisky and about two dozen bottles of soda-water.

"What on earth . . ." I began.

"It's quite all right, Captain Z. My idea is that we are all meeting here for a jolly evening."

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

"Well, it looks as if we were meeting for a wake or a wedding, and I should think by the time Byron arrives with Clarence he'll feel pretty sure it's for a wake, and his own at that. Has Jones arrived yet, because we've got to settle where he's to be hidden?"

"I've arranged that," said Tucker, obliterating all difficulties with a sweep of one plump hand across the other as if Jones's hiding-place were a mere gnat. "I've got the very place for him. At first I was going to rig up a screen, but I thought that might make Byron suspicious. So what about this?"

He indicated, with the air of a hospitable landlord ushering in a guest, a cupboard under the stairs that led up to the first storey.

"I fetched down a mattress from one of the bedrooms," Tucker continued, "and it'll be lovely and comfortable in there. We'll leave the door on the jar so that he can see what's going on."

"But Byron may see him."

"Ah, but I've arranged it so that he'll sit right at the far end of the cupboard."

"Won't it be rather stuffy?" I objected. "The stairs will be right down on top of his head. A miserable position for a shorthand writer to take down a conversation which may last a couple of hours."

"Well, I've given him a mattress," said Tucker. "He could lie down on his stomach if he liked."

Presently Jones himself arrived, and not all Tucker's *bulbul* blandishments could induce him to agree that his hiding-place was such a treat as Tucker tried to persuade him it was.

"Well, have a whisky, old man," he was invited.

Jones declined austere, and we packed him away into his cupboard with plenty of paper and a dozen well-sharpened pencils to wait for Byron.

ABSURDITIES OF SECRET-SERVICE

Tucker and I had been chatting for about ten minutes when we heard the muffled voice of Jones in protest.

"Look here, is there any need to shut this cupboard door? Because it's exceedingly hot in here, I may say."

"Sorry, old boy," said Tucker, "I didn't realize I'd shut the door on you. But keep well back, won't you. Because if our man spots you as he comes in he'll suspect something."

At this moment an elaborate tone-poem of rings and knocks proclaimed the arrival of Clarence. Tucker opened the door cautiously for the tallowy Byron to ooze his way round and stand blinking at the light, a sickly expression on his face, his pointed crocodile-leather boots grey with dust.

"Go on in, Byron," Clarence urged, with the voice and expression of an executioner inviting a victim to lay his head upon the block. "There's nothing to be afraid of, boy."

The agent looked nervously round and licked his dry thick lips. The walk with Clarence across the waste ground had evidently reduced him to a condition nearing collapse, and I suggested a whisky and soda to pull him together. Tucker in distinction to the sombre and portentous gloom of Clarence was inclined to exaggerate the joviality of the occasion, and could not pour out a bottle of soda without flinging the empty bottle across the room to mark, I presumed, the careless bohemianism of the occasion. Byron was by this time seated at the table, now sipping a strong whisky and soda, now with a brilliantly coloured handkerchief he had produced from his cuff dabbing at his forehead, which was like wet clay. I began to apprehend the terror which had played upon his guilty imagination when Clarence took me aside to ask in a hoarse whisper if he might take out drinks to his assistants.

"Your assistants? What assistants?"

"They're friends of mine, Captain Z. I'm not charging

them up on my weekly expenses ; but you wanted Byron brought here without fail, and it wasn't for me to take any risk of him escaping. So I asked two friends of mine to follow us ten paces in the rear. I took every precaution. Both of them had handkerchiefs tied round their faces."

"I wish you'd do what I tell you," I exclaimed irritably. "And not add idiotic trimmings of your own."

"It was volunteer work, Skipper," Clarence assured me. "I said I had a dangerous job before me to-night, and those two boys offered to come and see me through with it. You wanted Byron brought here. Right." He shrugged his shoulders till they wobbled like a camel's hump. "'The Skipper wants Byron,' that's what I said to myself. And I've brought the B. If he'd shot me between here and the Patissia Road, how could I have been sure of getting him here as you wanted ? That's the way I put it to myself. You give the orders, Skipper. I carry them out. That's Clarence."

He stood there, bowed by the spectacle of his own devotion.

"If you employ any unauthorized people to help you on a job in future, I shall have you sent back to London."

"Those are hard words, Skipper, for anyone who's doing his best."

"Tell those fellows outside to clear off at once," I interrupted.

Shaking his head at the extent of my capacity for misjudging his motives Clarence moved in ponderous dejection to the door, opened it quickly, shouted into the darkness a few words of Greek, and slammed it to as if he were dodging a hail of bullets from without.

It took all Tucker's bonhomie to restore Byron's nerve after what must have been a terrifying walk across that waste ground with Clarence's masked myrmidons dogging his heels. Indeed, it was past eleven o'clock before I was

able to begin the probing of Byron's good faith, and it was nearly three o'clock before I had finished with him. If all that time Jones had been doing his duty in the cupboard under the stairs, I knew that I should have a complete exposure of Byron, a record of lies, assertions, and contradictions which would demonstrate him unanswerably to be the worthless creature I had supposed him. He had drunk a good deal of whisky to sustain himself through the ordeal, and the last sight I had of Byron was squirming unsteadily out of the house, whence presumably he squirmed his way back into the Patissia Road, for there was no sign of him when we followed half an hour later.

I have seldom seen anybody so obviously the victim of acute discomfort as Jones when he emerged stiffly from that cupboard where he had been huddling for over four hours, with nothing to vary the monotony of taking down the questions and answers except an occasional blow from a soda-water bottle.

"You hit me rather hard once," he said to Tucker with a good deal of bitterness in his tone.

"I'm awfully sorry, old man," said Tucker cheerfully, "but I was afraid that swine Byron might think you were in there taking down what he was saying. So I thought I'd put him off by chucking the bottles into the cupboard as if it was just any old place. But of course I never thought any of them would hit you at all hard."

Next day V sent for me, and I knew by the extra courtliness of his manner that he was worried over something.

"I say, Z, do you mind managing without Jones in future? He came to me this morning and asked if he might go back home and join up, and when I asked him why he said he'd rather be in the trenches than go through again what he went through last night. And he is such a very good clerk that I don't want to lose him. I'm sure you'll see my point of view. His wife got very anxious about him

too, because he didn't get home till after four o'clock this morning, and she was afraid he'd been murdered by the Germans. And tell me, Z, in confidence, was Tucker quite sober last night? Because he seems to have struck poor Jones on the head with a soda-water bottle."

I told V the whole story. It would have amused him more if he had not been still feeling a little nervous that Jones would insist on being sent home, for Jones was an admirable and extremely accurate stenographer. In spite of his discomfort, and in spite of the shower of empty soda-water bottles from Tucker he had produced a most remarkable replica of the scene with Byron, a copy of which I sent with my compliments to Baron Schenck. I never found out what ultimately became of the slimy rascal; but he was certainly never employed again by the other side.

"Thank you very much, Mr. Jones," I said enthusiastically. "This is really a splendid piece of work."

"I think there's one answer there I haven't got quite right," he said, pointing to the script.

"Perhaps that was when Tucker hit you with the bottle," I suggested.

"Perhaps it was," said Jones without a smile.

CHAPTER VI

PERSONALITIES AND POLITICS

ALTHOUGH I was already meditating hard upon the problem of giving some kind of effective and significant form to the contre-espionage side of V's Bureau, several weeks were to elapse before the absurd scene described in the last chapter.

When I came out of the clinic I was still without any official appointment to a real job in Athens, beyond an authorization to collect and collate and send on to the Intelligence at G.H.Q. Kephala, the results of Liebig's somewhat erratic investigations. It is true that Clarence had been put at my disposal early in September; but I could only with extreme discretion make use of his services and those of the one or two other agents I could afford to employ out of the funds that Deedes was to allow me every month. So I took advantage of my comparative freedom from responsibility to see as much as I could of Athenian life. I was anxious to arrive at a point of view of my own about the real state of opinion in Greece, for such political reports as we were given at G.H.Q. had been so far removed from the first impression I had formed of the true condition of affairs that I was anxious to offer Sir Ian Hamilton a more accurate indication of the probable trend of Greek opinion and action than he had seemed to possess. There was too during that first week of September, 1915, a whisper of great events pending. George Lloyd at the end of August had visited Athens and after seeing Venizelos had been working for hours on a report of the situation. He had sent

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

a message to the clinic that he had no time to look in and see me.* Italy had declared war on Turkey at last. On August 23rd Venizelos had taken his rightful place as head of the Government to which the nation had elected him. Rumour declared that we had at last made up our minds to stop regarding operations on this front as a side-show. New French and British Divisions were already on their way. King Constantine was reported to be seriously thinking at last of disowning Germany. Lloyd George or Carson was to become Prime Minister, both of whom were in favour of making this front the critical point of the Allied line. There was to be an offensive in France which would keep the Germans quiet while heavy reinforcements were moving as fast as possible out here. Tucker and I were discussing the way we would run a contre-espionage show in Constantinople.

Brief were these dreams.

'O, *Hallelujah*,' Sir Ian Hamilton wrote gratefully in his diary on September 2nd, when, after waking from a nightmare in which a ghostly hand had seized him by the throat and held him down beneath the surging waters of the Hellespont, he heard from Lord Kitchener that the French were sending three or four Divisions immediately to work along the Asiatic mainland of the Straits. And

* For a long time I used to wonder if at this interview with M. Venizelos the landing of Allied troops at Salonica had been arranged over the heads of the Military as a political move. The way in which Lord Grey used to insist that he had invited the Allied troops to Salonica, and the obvious distress that such public statements caused M. Venizelos, made me suspicious. I knew that Sir Francis Elliot had had no inkling of the proposed landing and therefore that unless M. Venizelos had somehow communicated with the Authorities at home over Sir Francis's head he could not have invited the landing. That interview with George Lloyd, however, remained awkwardly in my memory and sapped my belief in the honour of M. Venizelos. Finally in 1921 I wrote to George Lloyd who was then Governor of Bombay and asked him point blank whether or not the Salonica landing had been discussed between him and M. Venizelos when he visited Athens in 1915. He wrote that no word of the landing was said and that the visit was connected with Sir Valentine Chirol's last-minute effort to bring in Bulgaria.

PERSONALITIES AND POLITICS

'Ichabod!' he wrote on September 14th, when he heard from Lord Kitchener that the dispatch of these reinforcements would depend on the success of the forthcoming offensive in the West.

However, before I could give my mind to the problem of Greek politics during that cheerful first week of September I had to solve the problem of my own clothes. I hesitate to dwell upon this topic, because an account in *Gallipoli Memories* of my difficulties over uniform and an allusion to my having contrived to sleep in silk pyjamas, even on active service, were assumed by several critics to imply an intolerable levity of demeanour in the middle of a great war. I need hardly say that American critics were particularly severe on the pyjamas. Although the mulberry and the fig are so closely related, the old Adam of puritanism has always looked askance at the silkworm. D. H. Lawrence who displayed in his attitude a typical development of puritanism had this horror of silk. He came to see me once in Capri when I was ill and stood louring by the bed without saying a word.

"What is the matter, Lawrence?" I asked. "You look annoyed about something."

"It's those damned silk pyjamas you're wearing," he replied. "I hate them. I hate damned frippery like that."

"Well, I hate your grey flannel shirts, Lawrence," I assured him as earnestly as I knew how, because it would not have done for me to smile at this moment.

"And I ought to hate you for wearing them," Lawrence continued.

"Yes, and I ought to hate you, Lawrence, for wearing those grey flannel shirts. But I don't, because I think they express the essential puritan which is in you."

"Perhaps it is," he admitted in that high dreamy tone of voice, the charm of which was indescribable. "You're right, I think. You know, I used to be a local preacher once."

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

Readers more contemptuous of externals than I was fifteen years ago must try of their charity to excuse my dismay at having nothing to wear but a reach-me-down cream-coloured suit of a material something like poplin when my friend Eddie Keeling arrived in Athens from Imbros and told me that Princess Nicholas had commanded him to take me to tea with her in Cephissia. There seemed to me something absolutely irreconcilable between having tea with the Grand Duchess Helen and that suit I had actually seen hanging up in the shop before I had bought it. But Keeling was firm. Her Imperial Highness had expressed a clear desire to make my acquaintance, and go I should. So I went, feeling as timorous and not nearly so well dressed as the White Rabbit on his way to the party of another Duchess. I need not have worried, for indeed the grace, the charm, and the beauty of that great lady would have made the folds of a more awkward suit than mine unnoticeable.

"And so you are going to Nish, Keeling," she said. "But do you think the Austrians and Germans will let you stay there long?"

"I hope not, Ma'am," Keeling replied. "I hear it's unspeakably loathsome there."

And as I recall that room in the Cephissia villa where the sunlight was tempered by great pine-trees, and civilization seemed to have expressed an ultimate perfection of type in the great lady who was our hostess, I fancy that what she and Keeling were saying to one another are words that I am putting into the mouths of figures on a Minoan fresco. I can hardly believe that they are not both sitting there now and that they will not be sitting there for ever.

Yet I know that only a day or two later Keeling was off to take up his post at the Legation in Nish. That was the week when we were all in a mood of extreme optimism, for he was followed by a number of huge trunks which were

PERSONALITIES AND POLITICS

filled with what he considered the indispensable minimum for an endurable existence in the temporary capital of Serbia. His last behest to me was to be sure and see that a pair of riding-breeches I was to get cleaned for him in Athens were sent on promptly. Then he went northward to encipher some of those telegrams for help from Serbia, and then to suffer the ordeal of the Serbian retreat as escort of the British nurses. I did not hear from him until the following May, and cannot resist quoting from his letter :

I wrote you a delightful chatty letter dated January 30 which after being read by every military post officer in the Near East was returned to me to-day, open, with remarks such as 'not known at Anzac,' 'not a member of the R.A.M.C.' 'Signalling Dept. have no knowledge of this officer, try Veterinary Section,' etc. I now hear from Erskine that you are still at Athens. After unspeakable horrors in Serbia, Montenegro and Albania I am now happily established here, and can offer you a room if you ever come to Rome.

My breeches you kindly had cleaned arrived just before the Bulgars, and were much admired by the 150 virgins whom I conducted intact across the mountain passes of Montenegro and Albania.

Besides presenting me to Princess Nicholas, Keeling, before he left Athens, took me to the Italian Legation to call upon the Contessa Bosdari, the wife of the Minister.

It might be possible for the friends of the Marchesa Casati to claim that she was the most remarkable feminine personality in Europe during the decade between 1910 and 1920, and it must be admitted that she did touch the sublime heights of eccentricity, an inspired moment on the peak of which Augustus John has recorded in paint. Who then living on Capri can forget her landing to take possession of San Michele which she had rented from Dr. Axel Munthe ? Who but the Marchesa would have arrived at the

Grande Marina late at night with nothing but a negro servant and a blue parrot? And who but she would ever have employed a negro servant whose appetite was at once so delicate and so voracious that he must eat two whole chickens every day? Dr. Munthe should have added a chapter about that tenancy to his delightful *Story of San Michele*. Still, those who were privileged to enjoy the friendship of the Contessa Bosdari would maintain her claim to be considered a not less remarkable personality and as capable of scaling the heights of sublime eccentricity as the Marchesa herself.

At this period the Contessa made a habit of receiving visitors between half-past two and half-past three, when she always wore evening dress. On this afternoon her costume was of pale lavender satin sewn thickly with glass bugles, which gave her the look of a figure from the frame of a rococo Venetian mirror. It was her habit to assume each year a regular *maquillage*, the feature of which in 1915 was two brilliant splashes of crimson rouge on the points of her cheekbones. The following year her *maquillage* was a dead white, and I remember once sitting in her box at the Athens Opera House, the audience of which always gave the same effect of unmanageable provincial wealth as the audience of the Metropolitan Opera House in New York, and thinking how she with her huge black-plumed hat and pale face and long ivory cigarette holder and mundane serenity created an illusion of La Scala.

She was excessively thin, but too lithe and graceful for such an epithet. Her ankles were of a fineness quite incredible, and to see her fanning herself in a high-backed chair and pointing her foot to the floor was to be granted the effect of watching some ballerina perform a miracle of exquisite poise. There must have been a dozen men in her darkened *salon* on the afternoon when Keeling took me to call upon her for the first time. I only remember two of

them—Prince Ghika, a Roumanian of immense wealth, and the handsome and dashing ‘Tanty’ Rodocanachi. The conversation was political, and the Contessa was evidently bored with politics that afternoon, for she sat back in her chair, pointing her toes on the floor and occasionally interrupting the political discussion to ask some question about novels in her deep voice. Finally, she dismissed us all; and I remember walking back to the hotel with Rodocanachi, who was explaining all the way what a mess our diplomats were making of Greece. At that date I still clung to the superstition that there might be reasons of major necessity which compelled the Foreign Office to appear incapable of doing the right thing in the Balkans. I suggested that if we knew the whole facts of the European situation we might be able to understand better the difficulties which beset our diplomacy out here. But Rodocanachi would not hear of this for an excuse, and after Gallipoli how was it possible to maintain that there existed any constructive statesmanship in England?

It was an intellectual relief, after contemplating the apparent inability of anybody at home to know what he wanted and set about getting it, to come into contact with the *sacro egoismo* of Italy in the person of her Minister to the Court of Greece. Count Bosdari was in his way as remarkable a personality as his wife. He did not resemble the popular notion of a diplomat, least of all an Italian diplomat. He was a man of distinguished ugliness with a clipped black beard and a harsh voice, and his manner was that of a grumpy professor who could not suffer fools and who desired to discourage most of the people he met from supposing even for a moment that he could. His training had been in the school of San Giuliano, which meant he believed that his country should never have entered the war. Not that he was a pro-German, unless a profound distrust of democracy was to be a pro-German. His

spiritual home was England, and I think he felt that England by not remaining neutral had committed as signal an error of political judgment as his own country. He had been Secretary of Embassy in London, and his gruff voice comes clearly back to me from the other side of the big table at which he used to work on the top floor of the Italian Legation in Athens.

"I am hoping that, when this mad war is over, I shall perhaps be given London. That is my great desire. I would be very happy to be Ambassador in London. Of all things in my career perhaps I regard with most pleasure my time in England. You have in your country a possibility to lead the most civilized existence in Europe. And that life of Oxford and Cambridge. I am always thinking of my visits, and hoping that perhaps one day I shall be able to make them again."

I had been accustomed to hearing foreigners sigh for the wonderful country house life of England and wish for the war to come to an end so that they might return to it. The prospect of perhaps losing that country house life of England undoubtedly distressed King Constantine when he saw that his policy was beginning to alienate English public opinion. He seldom failed to allude to the time after the war, and of his longing to see England again; and he would use that as an argument to convince the soldier or wandering diplomat to whom he was granting an audience how wrong it was to misjudge his attitude. He was completely sincere. Indeed, the tragedy of the Greek situation was that very sincerity of all concerned. I remember feeling, as Count Bosdari expressed his nostalgia for dinners at High Table and the conversation of Senior Common Rooms, that it would never be satisfied, even though in fancy I would be sitting with him under an elm rising solitary from the level green of a college lawn. I divined that we should never sit thus in reality, neither thus nor in the heart of

PERSONALITIES AND POLITICS

Italy, beneath some Horatian pine consecrated to Diana. I suppose that coming political events had already cast their shadow upon my growing friendship with Bosdari, which was to be severed ultimately by irreconcilable differences of opinion. And after Athens instead of the London he desired he was to be given of all cities most inimical to his taste, Buenos Aires. From Buenos Aires he went to Berlin, which owing to a disagreement with Signor Mussolini was his last post. So for him as for so many others the lucid air of Greece darkened to a tragic twilight.

In the early part of the time I spent in Athens before it became an *idée fixe* of mine that it was essential for the future of Great Britain's Eastern responsibilities to take the lead in supporting Venizelos it was pleasant and easy to indulge in academic discussions of foreign policy with Bosdari, though even then I felt that his dislike and distrust of Venizelos were due more to his Italian fear of a powerful Greece and his aristocratic dread of a triumphant Greek democracy than to the cool judgment of a scholarly observer.

"I cannot understand," I told him once, "why you are so convinced that a strong Greece is necessarily going to threaten the position of Italy. Of course, I admit we may lose the war altogether and revert to the pre-war state of affairs, with Austria still the dominating factor in Balkan issues and the Hamburg to Bagdad railway *verboden* to the rest of Europe, though that seems most improbable. But how in the case of victory, if Italy take the place of Austria as a Mediterranean power, is she going to achieve both a weak Serbia and a weak Greece? And even if Italy does achieve her object and secure both, how will she prevent France from building up a counterbalance of power by means of Roumania and Poland, and possibly even a revived state of Bohemia?"

But Bosdari would not admit that his dislike and distrust

of Venizelos had anything to do with his dread of Panhellenism.

"It is not because I am afraid of a strong Greece, that I think it mad to count on Venizelos," he insisted. "I object to so much importance being attached to Venizelos, because I do not believe that Venizelos has anything like the influence attributed to him, especially by your people. The King's attitude justly represents the attitude of the Greeks toward the war. They do not want to fight, and the notion that they are only being kept from fighting by the King is imbecile. Go round Athens, and you will hardly find anybody who does not trust the King's estimate of the situation better than he trusts that of Venizelos."

"Oh, I admit that in Old Greece the instinct is to hold on as tightly as possible to what was gained as a result of the last Balkan war; but the feeling in New Greece is very different. The Greeks of the Asia Minor Islands cannot feel uninterested in what may happen in Asia Minor after the war. The future of Smyrna must be in their minds, not to mention the future of Constantinople. If the boundaries of Greece were what they were before the last Balkan war, I should certainly think that Greece was better out of the present business; but for them to expect to be able to hold on to Salonica without fighting for it is to put all their money on the defeat of the Entente, because if the Entente wins, Serbia will want Salonica, and Italy will be bound to agree to Serbia's having Salonica in order to keep Serbia out of the Adriatic, and there you are with a weakened Greece but a strengthened Serbia. How is that going to benefit Italy, with the Russians in possession of Constantinople, the Serbians in possession of Salonica, and the French with Smyrna, which they will demand as the price of your keeping the Dodecanese. I would not be too sure that you will be allowed to develop even Adalia, for I gather from some of my Tory friends like George Lloyd

that Italian ambitions in Southern Asia Minor are already being looked at askance."

"Yes, yes," said Bosdari, "but this is all idle talk. The point of immediate importance is that if the Greeks come in to fight with us they will be more trouble than they are worth. Let them alone to clear out Venizelos in their own way, which they will certainly do."

"You are so confident after what has happened at the Dardanelles that we can re-establish ourselves on this front without Greek help?"

"Indeed I am not at all confident, my friend. It is quite certain that within a few weeks Bulgaria will join with Germany, and the future is by no means pleasant to contemplate. But it is quite certain that a few wretched Greeks will not influence that unpleasant future one way or the other."

That future was not becoming more pleasant to contemplate. The Germans were reported to be concentrating in force at Breslau with a view to obliterating Serbia. There were persistent rumours of a tremendous attack about to be launched against Egypt. The news from France and Italy was not encouraging. Bulgaria was evidently on the verge of entering the war upon the side of the Central Powers. The position of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force during the winter began to look like becoming untenable. The Germans were driving back the Russians all along the line, and the fall of Petrograd was already being talked of.

At a time so fit for pessimism as this the arrival of Captain Lancelot Lowther in Athens exercised a sedative effect upon the agitated mind. It was incredible that Lancelot Lowther could belong to a nation in danger of defeat. He was enjoying that crowded hour of glorious life the war had brought him. He cast over the cosmopolitan racket of the Hotel d'Angleterre the serenity of rural England. To watch him smoking a large cigar in the lobby and looking so extremely like the photographs of his brother Lord Lons-

dale at Newmarket was to be granted a kind of assurance that the war really would come to an end one day and that England definitely would be herself again. At dinner that night he asked whether I had noticed he was a little deaf, and explained that it was due to the noise of the guns in France. The War Office messengers at this time travelled between Whitehall and Athens via G.H.Q. in France and Rome. At first they had all gone on to G.H.Q. Gallipoli ; but there had been a fuss over the amount of gossip they took back, and it was only now that they were again being allowed to go on from Athens to Imbros, whither Lowther was bound that week-end. Soon after making this remark about his deafness he asked me if I had noticed the way he continually kept looking under the table, and explained that the habit had crept over him since he had been carrying official bags.

"Always looking down to see if those confounded bags are safe. They're a deuce of a responsibility."

The next time I was to see Lowther was in Taranto a little more than a year later when he alone of the survivors of the *Arabia* was as spick and span as if he had arrived from Bond Street instead of a torpedoed P. and O. liner. Not only was he perfectly dressed, but he was smoking a cigar as usual.

"As soon as the torpedo struck us," he said, "I asked the Captain how long we had before we sank. He told me that he thought I could count on five minutes. So I went down to my cabin and dressed myself properly, packed my cigars with both my suit-cases, and slid down the side of the ship into the last boat just as she was turning over."

And when I looked at the other survivors in every oddity of attire, among whom Lancelot Lowther was strolling around without showing a sign of shipwreck, an assurance that the war really would come to an end one day and that England definitely would be herself again was renewed.

CHAPTER VII

ONE SEPTEMBER DAY

THAT fortnight after I left the clinic was a kaleidoscope of which I cannot reconstruct the shifting patterns, so that nothing remains of it in my memory but a jumbled heap of brightly tinted bits of glass. The few scrappy letters I wrote home about this time reflecting as they did the confusion of my own mind, the confusion of these new surroundings, and the confusion of the political situation are often, now that I re-read them, more of a hindrance than a help to a clear narrative. I long to reproduce with the shapeliness the passage of years should have given it, the effect of that crowd of new faces and new impressions ; but it swims across my memory with a dreamy inconsequence that exasperates my love of correct dates and accurate order. Yet by the help of one letter and two or three engagements noted down in a pocket-book I can squeeze from the past the incidents of one day, which will serve as typical. This was Thursday the ninth of September.

It began with a cup of black Turkish coffee at nine o'clock, after which I sat down to work by the window of my bedroom in the Hotel d'Angleterre. It would have been impossible for anybody not to waste a few minutes in looking out across the roofs of Athens to where upon the Acropolis the columns of the Parthenon rode light as clouds upon the air of the morning, and no doubt I duly wasted them before I applied myself to the problem of those sixty thousand rifles said by one Armenian to have been hidden

by another Armenian among the islands of the Ægean archipelago. I laugh aloud now to think that at this date I was still innocent enough to suppose that my own natural sight would uncover the truth. The notion that I once fancied myself capable of piercing the secret of an Armenian is so comic that but for my notes on this case which still exist in a pocket-book, pages of them written in an illegible shorthand, I should not credit my fatuous self-confidence. Then there was the case of L 20 who would have been in our list the twentieth questionable individual, one of whose many aliases would have begun with L. I find in the same pocket-book an excerpt from an agent's report of his activities which had evidently amused me: *'His grandfather was called Aaron or Aronachi. He was a "hecabaz" (a low-class juggler) and through women-trade and other filthy works he got into great intimacy with a certain Pasha and one day during a severe illness of this one he stole his seal and managed to make false documents and bills so that when the Pasha he died Aaron became owner of good properties and makes a fortunate family.'* There were pages more about L 20, but these have been burnt and I only remember now that we had a good case against him, that we secured his arrest on some Greek ship, that he was carrying four passports, and that he spent a long time of seclusion at Malta.

No doubt on that September morning in 1915 I was gloating over the papers of L 20 as a schoolboy might gloat over a rare bird's-egg or postage stamp. He was one of our best specimens. Tucker, the kindest of creatures, was already contemplating with enthusiastic ferocity the collection of enough evidence against L 20 to have him shot. Meanwhile, it was my job this morning to put his biography down for inclusion in Graves's Newgate Calendar, for I was going back to G.H.Q. in three days' time and Graves was panting after my list as the hart after cooling streams

There were a couple of hundred more names for that list which I must get in order and it was difficult to work in this hotel room. Anybody who has tried to write in the bedroom of an hotel will know the ingenuity with which hotel furnishers always manage to provide tables adapted for any other pursuit except writing. The particular table which had been dug out in response to my appeal for a place to write at was afflicted with an incurable palsy, and I was almost afraid to shake a recalcitrant fountain-pen lest the added weight of one blot of ink should cause it to collapse altogether.

Presently, Joseph, my valet, came in. There may seem as Dr. Johnson would have said, something wild in keeping a valet to look after one cream-coloured suit of a material like poplin, six khaki shirts of a material like nothing else on earth, a pair of white linen trousers which some kind friend had volunteered to lend me when he heard I lacked cool clothing, but which owing to the reduction of my figure by illness were of no more use to me than a large laundry bag, a blue flannel coat which I could only wear out of doors, owing to a bottle of hair-wash's having got broken over it, and my khaki uniform. But the employment of Joseph as a valet was inspired less by his ability to look after clothes than by having somebody at hand for messages. Considering that Joseph had spent the whole of his life until now as a waiter he looked after clothes rather well, though he did retain a tendency to fold my shirts like napkins. At first I fancied that Joseph, who by the way was another Maltese, was so much steeped in the romance of being attached in a minor confidential capacity to the secret-service that the exaggerated caution of his movements even in crossing a room was his expression of it. Presently, however, I discovered that it was flat feet and not romance which caused that cat-on-hot-bricks gait. Apart from these flat feet which betrayed that he had spent his life either as a police-

man or a waiter, the external appearance of Joseph was all that one could desire from a secret messenger disguised as a valet. He had a fierce, upcurling black moustache, an olive skin, and flashing dark eyes. Indeed, except for those flat feet he would not have let the picture down if painted in attendance behind the chair of a Borgia. In private life Joseph was a devoted husband and father, and when he ceased to be useful as a pseudo-valet he was employed as one of the janitors of the great passport bureau which was one day to evolve from the absurdities of the present organization. When Joseph first entered our service I would receive on an average two anonymous letters a week denouncing him as a traitor ; but I was able to satisfy myself of his integrity and devotion and discover that the denunciations came from rivals who wanted his job. He spoke English well enough ; but he was more comfortable with Italian, and that was the language in which we communicated with one another.

That morning I sent Joseph off as soon as he arrived to fetch Tucker's daily budget and bring back some answers to various questions, and while he was away I managed to put on my ready made suit without his help. When my valet came back, however, an hour later I had for him a task likely to puzzle even his ingenuity. I had already been invited to dinner that night with Admiral Cardale, who was acting Chief of the British Naval Mission during Admiral Mark Kerr's absence on sick leave, and I had excused myself in advance for not going in evening dress ; but now there arrived from Contessa Bosdari an invitation to her reception at the Italian Legation for the new French Minister, M. Guillemin, at which Royalty was to be present.

" Joseph," I asked him. " Where, when, and how can I possibly get hold of some dress clothes for to-night ? "

" *Signor capitano*," Joseph replied without a moment's hesitation. " I have a suit you can wear."

ONE SEPTEMBER DAY

Joseph's suit lacked the finer contours which are alleged to reveal the cunning scissors of Conduit Street or Savile Row and, when I tried it on that morning, it looked definitely green in the fierce Athenian sunlight.

"*Non abbia paura, signor capitano*, have no fear," Joseph urged. "By night it will be completely black. *È uno smoking molto bello, molto fino.*"

I could not quite bring myself to agree with Joseph about its beauty and refinement, but it certainly was a 'smoking', and I knew that it would be much easier to carry off a badly cut dinner-jacket than a badly cut tail-coat. Although otherwise lean, Joseph had developed probably owing to the slowness of his movements, a premature spread; but by buttoning up the jacket I should be able to hide the amplitude of the waistcoat. There was no difficulty about buying a shirt and collar of course, and with a glossy pair of new patent-leather shoes I should look when dressed like somebody who had at last inherited an old dress-suit from his father. I made up my mind to try the effect of it first on the Cardales' dinner-party. I would observe if people stammered and looked embarrassed when I was introduced to them, and I could count on friendly criticism from various members of the Mission. The problem of my attire settled, I worked on till one o'clock, and then went down to lunch with the Cuninghames. The only thing I remember about the occasion was that somebody was present, perhaps a Greek officer, of whom I was asking the correct pronunciation of various classic names in modern Greek.

"And how do you pronounce the three great tragic writers, Euripides, Sophocles, and . . . ?" For the life of me I could not recollect for a moment who was the third. "And the other great poet?" I said impatiently.

Nobody at the table could immediately supply the name which had ridiculously slipped my memory.

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

"But you all know his name as well as you know your own. Oh, who is it?"

And suddenly Petros the dear old waiter who used to serve at our table took advantage of leaning over to offer me some dish to croak hoarsely in my ear: "Aeschylus."

"Yes, yes, Aeschylus!"

And I can still see the broad grin of benign complacency which wreathed that genial old face as Petros retired to fetch the next course. How many waiters in England could supply the name of a tragic poet lost to a guest in a moment of aberration, and how many if they could would?

It was after lunch that I saw standing in the entrance lobby of the hotel a youth wearing a white fustanella (or kilt) of a material like tarlatan, white tights gartered with red below the knee, upcurving shoes of red leather with big black pompons on the toes, a zouave jacket of blue cloth braided and lined with red, and a red round cap with a long tassel of black silk. Beside him stood a child of about eight, who reproduced over again in miniature from tassel to pompon the young man. With slim wrists, girl's waist, long shapely legs, a face and profile which might have made Praxiteles stare at their perfection, a complexion like a tea-rose, and a natural grace of movement and attitude which made him perpetually decorative, he was to the average Athenian as the Parthenon to the average Athenian house. The porter told me that he was a young Evzone from the Epirus who had just come back from doing his military service, and who having been a hall boy at the hotel before he went away was now asking to be taken on again in order to support a widowed mother and keep the little brother who was standing beside him. The Evzones are the Highlanders of Greece and like our Highlanders wear a modification of their national dress as uniform. Evzone literally means well girdled or well waisted, and it takes a good figure to carry off that dress.

ONE SEPTEMBER DAY

"Perhaps you could find him a place?" the hall porter suggested. "He is a very good boy, very quick and intelligent without any fear at all of anybody or anything."

"Why doesn't the hotel engage him again?" I asked.

"Oh, it is impossible. When he was here before, he was getting so many tips from everybody that all the other hotel servants have been jealous, and are now coming to me to say that if I employ him again they will all give notice."

Tucker had for some days been urging me to have what he called a 'minder,' or in other words a perpetual escort to guard me against the machinations of the enemy, and in this V had supported Tucker, for by this time V was getting thoroughly nervous of the way things might develop in Athens, and his own particular bugbear was a dread of being kidnapped by the Turks and tortured to death. Only the previous evening I had strolled across from the table at the Grande Bretagne at which I was dining to the table where V and Waugh, the Commercial Attaché, and two or three others dined together every evening, always in dinner-jackets, in order to pay V back a shilling I had had occasion to borrow from him earlier in the day. V had not noticed my approach, and when I put the shilling into his hand it might have been a piece of molten lead, for he jumped a foot into the air and told me to go away at once and never to do such a thing again in a public place. I had to hurry away from the table as quickly as possible leaving the shilling on the table, which V at once covered with a napkin.

I could not persuade myself that I really did require a 'minder' in spite of Tucker's blood-curdling tales of the way people had to his certain knowledge disappeared mysteriously from Constantinople.

"Ah, it's all very well for you to laugh, Captain Z. But you'd look a bit funny if the Huns got you one night. You don't know this part of the world like I do."

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

"Yes, but suppose they got my 'minder' as well? I should look still funnier. And I don't see why they shouldn't as easily get both as one."

Tucker shook his head.

"You'll remember I warned you one day when it'll be too late," he sighed.

However, though I did not think Stavro (that was the name of the young Evzone) would protect me against my enemies if they chose to be nasty, I did see how he might be of help to develop my policy of secrecy by means of publicity. Nothing could be more conspicuous than to drive about Athens with an Evzone on the box-seat of the carriage, especially when he was in full dress with a jacket of white silk embroidered with silver lace and a large sword and two daggers stuck in his girdle. So Stavro was engaged, and for a month he served his purpose admirably by focusing upon himself public attention. Then the Greek Army was mobilized, and he had to leave to rejoin his regiment. I did not see him again for nearly two years, when he turned up in Syra and was given a job as one of the janitors at our offices. For a week or two he hung about gracefully in that sunny paved courtyard, playing with a Siamese kitten when he was not taking messages or otherwise engaged. But alas, he had deteriorated under the influence of an idle military life, and when he was off duty he took to swaggering about the streets of Syra and pushing people off the pavement. Finally he attacked with the flat of his sword some man who had objected to being pushed into the gutter and had to be sacked and deported to Athens, which seems to illustrate once more what a dangerous gift of the gods is personal beauty.

I worked for an hour after lunch, and then drove out with Lady Cuninghame to a tennis-party given by Prince Demidoff, the Russian Minister, at his villa in Cephissia. Prince Demidoff was a handsome man of considerable

ONE SEPTEMBER DAY

wealth who might just as easily have been one of the Stewards of the Jockey Club as a Muscovite diplomat. He was not by repute much wrapped up in his profession. Although the effect of his attitude was that he regarded the war as a boring interruption to the amenities of existence, I used to divine in conversation with him a malaise at the back of his mind about the future of Russia, to which he gave expression by a lightly cynical manner about the course the war was taking. He was credited with more personal influence over King Constantine than any other Entente Minister, and it was usually he who was called upon to prepare the King by friendly and as it may have often sounded somewhat avuncular advice to receive one of those many Notes that the Allies used to present to the Greek Government. That tennis-party seems in memory as far away as parties years before the war, because within a short time Athens was to be so deeply seared by the struggle between the King and M. Venizelos that such parties became impossible.

The Grand Duchess was playing tennis when we arrived, and after the set was over she talked to me first of all about books and plays in which Prince Nicholas was interested even to the point, as I remember, of writing plays himself. Then she asked me suddenly what I was really doing in Athens.

"Well, Ma'am, there has been some talk of my doing propaganda in the Greek Press."

"That is very much needed," she told me. "But you must not run away with the idea that because many of the people here do not believe in the policy of M. Venizelos they are therefore against us."

I realized that she was speaking now not merely as a Greek Princess, but also as a Russian Grand Duchess, and then gradually, as she expounded the point of view of those who dreaded the effect of Venizelos's influence on Greece,

I began to divine that she was above all speaking as Royalty and expressing the apprehension which was perhaps gnawing at the tranquillity of every Royal family in Europe. A sweeping victory for either side in the war would inevitably sweep away in its course some members of the great European Royal Family. Here in Greece was a family joined by ties of equal strength to England, Russia, and Germany. King Constantine himself was half a Dane and half a Russian, a favourite nephew of Queen Alexandra and the brother-in-law of the German Emperor. Prince George, between whom and Venizelos was the sharpest personal enmity of all, was married to a daughter of Prince Roland Bonaparte, and of the Greek Princes it was he who was closest to France, the chief support of his political and personal enemy. Prince Nicholas was married to the ivory princess by whom I was seated, herself a Romanoff and a first cousin of the Tsar. Prince Andrew was married to an Anglo-German princess, daughter of Prince Louis of Battenberg. Prince Christopher, who at this moment for all his plumpness and slight myopia was playing a most agile game of tennis, was not yet married at all, and in the present turmoil of conflicting national interests was likely to find it difficult to find a wife of the Blood Royal without provoking criticism. That he should ultimately marry a rich American widow would have been at that date beyond belief. Even in England, where if anywhere the Royal Family was safe enough whatever happened in Europe, there had been a change of names. Battenberg was now Mountbatten; Teck had turned to Cambridge; Brunswick-Luneburg and Saxe-Coburg-Gotha had shrunk to Windsor, thus completing the final anglicization of the Elector of Hanover's line. President Wilson had not at this date decided to make the world safe for democracy; but it was already beginning to look extremely unsafe for anything else.

ONE SEPTEMBER DAY

Although, while the Grand Duchess was talking, I had this momentary glimpse of a long glamorous vista of lost causes and perhaps even a positive intimation of the doom that would come upon that Royal family of Greece, with such completeness of fortune's malice as hardly to leave one member of it unscathed, that very revelation made me afraid of surrendering coolness and clearness of vision to what would seem to myself the hot sunset hues of chivalry, to others the romantic snobbery with which they credited people like Mark Kerr.

It was necessary for me to leave the tennis party early that afternoon in order to pay my visit to V in Academy Street, which I reached about half-past six. He was full of kindness and courtesy that day as indeed he always was, but my imprudent behaviour in handing him back that shilling at dinner last night was still on his mind.

"You won't do anything like that again, will you, Z? It is one of the first rules of our work never in any circumstances whatever to pass money in a public place."

"But, V, it was only a shilling. Nobody could possibly have imagined anything odd about that."

"No, but it's the principle of the thing, my dear fellow," said V with gentle reproach in his tone. "And I hope you won't ever do such a thing again."

To change the subject and get V's mind off that shilling I told him of an amusing dream I had had about him the night before.

"I dreamt you had cut your moustache off, V, and when I asked you why, you told me it was in order to disguise yourself."

For the second time in twenty-four hours I saw V leap from his chair.

"Good god," he exclaimed, "what an astonishing thing! Do you know that only this morning on my way down to the office I was thinking to myself that perhaps it

would not be a bad idea if I were to cut off my moustache ? But do you think it really would disguise me at all ? ” he asked anxiously.

I looked at V's dark military moustache and told him that I did not think the loss of it would make people suppose his place in Athens had been taken by another mysterious unknown.

“ Perhaps you're right,” said V, filling his big pipe from the bowl beside him. “ By the way, what do you think of a plan I've been turning over in my mind for getting information out of Turkey when, as seems probable, we are going to find it more and more difficult. I had an idea, I don't know if there's anything in it, of putting messages in air-tight tins and floating them down rivers to be collected by a boat standing in for the purpose. I also wondered if we mightn't manage something rather effective with well-made toy balloons. Think it over and tell me what you feel about the possibilities of such methods of communication. There are objections to both, of course ; but something will have to be done presently to get the information out. And that reminds me, what do you think of these ? ”

He cautiously unlocked a drawer in the side of his desk and showed me six lumps of coal.

“ Coal,” I observed fatuously.

“ Bombs,” V said in a low voice. “ We are going to have a shot to blow up the Kuleli Burgas Bridge. I've taken a great deal of trouble about this. There are coal depots, as perhaps you know, near the bridge, and I obtained through one of our agents some of the actual coal from these dumps. This coal has been copied in London for the cases of these bombs, which can be timed to explode at any time up to a month after setting them. Baden is going to take them down to-night and give them to Rogers on board our boat the *Valkyrie*. I wonder if you'd mind going down to Phaleron to-night with B and letting me know to-morrow

ONE SEPTEMBER DAY

morning that all went off well. B is a capital fellow, but he is apt to be careless and forgetful. I don't want him to leave any of these bombs lying about anywhere."

I told V about the reception at the Italian Legation and suggested driving down with Tucker afterwards.

"Splendid," said V. "That will be a perfect blind. Nobody is likely to be shadowing you there."

I left Academy Street to go back to the hotel and put on Joseph's dress suit before setting out to the Cardales' dinner-party.

Rear-Admiral Cardale was in his present post two steps ahead of his rank at home, and like nearly every other officer with the Mission he was beginning to wonder whether an exalted but temporary rank out here was worth holding at such a time when promotion at home might be slipping past him. At the moment he was in command, and with a rumour that Admiral Mark Kerr on account of his indiscreet advocacy of King Constantine was not going to be allowed to come back to Greece, Cardale was perhaps wondering if he had a chance of retaining the command. He was a genial host and I recall one or two jolly evenings in their rooms from which I cannot clearly detach this particular evening.

I fancy, though, that it was this evening I first met George Leith, who was the outstanding personality among the members of the Naval Mission, and who would indeed have been an outstanding personality in any surroundings. As swarthy as a muleteer and as strong as a gorilla, he was as temperamental as an art student. Some years of service with a gunboat up the Chinese rivers had accentuated a touch of the Tartar in his physiognomy. Association with the peoples of the Far East seems to stamp itself on the European countenance. The Anglo-Indian returns from years of service more obviously and even aggressively British than he was when he left home; but China is too

much for the Aryan, and few escape the stamp of that unimaginable aggregation of human beings. George Leith was a man who feared nothing and nobody ; but since absolute fearlessness usually implies a measure of irresponsibility he let himself in for plenty of criticism. The inaction of naval life out in Greece compared with the opportunities of action elsewhere at such a time was beginning to get on George Leith's nerves. He was growing daily inclined to become more and more quarrelsome. His rank at home would have been Commander, but out here like the rest of his brother officers on the Mission he had a temporary rank a step above his own. In spite of his size and strength, and sometimes overweening manner, his voice was curiously light and staccato, often not unlike the voice of a petulant schoolboy. He was a facile prey to his own emotions, and gave an impression of being positively incapable of the most elementary prudence, so that the danger of his pitching away his own career to gratify a passing whim never seemed far off. Later in the war he did brilliant service in the North Sea, with a destroyer leader ; but at this date he was in a mood of profound pessimism about his naval future and in the resultant exasperation doing all that he could by his behaviour to imperil it. When I look back at him, he stands out from his colleagues as a rich portrait by Franz Hals would stand out on the line at an exhibition of the Royal Academy. There were many stories of George Leith of which I will record one. He had recently gone aboard one of our cruisers lying in an Ægean harbour and demanded medicine from the surgeon.

"What medicine ?" he was asked.

"What medicine ?" repeated Leith indignantly. "Why a box of starters and a bottle of stoppers. What other medicine should I want ?"

There could have been no greater contrast to George

Leith than the other Commander attached to the Mission. Captain Wells was the ideal instructor and intensely aware of the delicacy of his position at such a time. There were some who called his refusal to supply any information about the Greek Navy too scrupulous. My own feeling was that, if a man believed he had no right to take advantage of his opportunities and pass on his knowledge, he was completely justified. Moreover, Wells had a genuine sympathy for the difficulties of the Greeks, and the correctness of his attitude was not inspired, as some suggested, by his fondness for that correct society which was almost to an individual in sympathy with the King's policy. I look back now and ask myself how any of us in Athens ever did manage to reach a definite opinion about what was best to be done immediately, let alone what was to be done ultimately. Had the British Government been illuminated by even the glimmering of a notion of what it wanted in the Balkans that notion could have been carried out. Those who felt themselves unable to be of service in trying to further a policy with which they could not agree could have asked to be transferred elsewhere. As it was, the British Foreign Office led the hand to mouth existence of a street conjurer, producing out of a battered old Whitehall top hat Thrace, Cyprus, Macedonia, and badly cut chunks of Asia Minor to earn the pennies of a sceptical Balkan audience. We in Athens came each of us by his own road to his own policy and, finding that there was no policy at home, each of us tried to carry out his own. At the same time, whatever blame may rest on the Foreign Office the improvisation of the Salonica landing was entirely the fault of the military authorities, who surrendered just as weakly to the French point of view over that as later on the Foreign Office seemed to surrender to the Quai d'Orsay. I fancied when I set out to write down these memories that I had achieved the necessary detachment; but from the past rises the old

exasperation, and such a pleasant occasion as a dinner with the Cardales, such an impeccable figure as Captain Wells, can set the mind racing round again as much like an impotent squirrel in a cage as it seemed when racing round fifteen years ago.

It is time to go on from dinner to the reception given at the Italian Legation to M. Guillemin, the new French Minister, who probably never suspected that night into what a bed of nettles he had been dropped. Poor M. Guillemin ! He was almost the only diplomat in Athens of whom I never heard anybody say a good word. He irritated King Constantine whom he lectured and scolded with less suavity than a bilious professor. He irritated Sir Francis Elliot, because he would stand on the steps of the British Legation and shout at him secrets of Allied diplomacy. He irritated Count Bosdari to such an extent that Count Bosdari would sometimes glare and almost snarl at him with the expression of a cornered mandrill. And he irritated the members of his own Legation not a whit less than he irritated the members of every other. Perhaps the reason why he was sent to Greece at all was the way he must have irritated everybody at the Quai D'Orsay before he arrived, so that with sardonic French humour they had decided to send him to the most difficult diplomatic post in Europe. Fortunately for M. Guillemin he was bubbling over with too much self-esteem ever to observe any lack of esteem in others. Yet he was a kindly creature, the victim of a tiresome voice which like the peacock he was too vain to realize. I can see M. Guillemin now standing on the steps of the British Legation in a frock coat much too large for him and shouting away to his *cher collègue*, the British Minister, who, lean and grey, would be eyeing him rather in the way a heron might eye a stranded salmon.

Most of the members of the Entente and Neutral Legations were at the Bosdari reception that night. Colonel

Braquet, the French Military Attaché, was there, a dapper little man with a pointed nose which was presently going to be put out of joint by the new French Naval Attaché, Comte de Roquefeuil, who however had not arrived in Athens by this date. Colonel Goudim Lefcovitch, the Russian Military Attaché, was there, a fair slim man married to an English wife, a state which gave him a particular interest in England, but had not yet succeeded in teaching him to understand a great deal about his wife's country.

"What is England doing?" he would always ask me when we met. "What *is* England doing?"

Goudim had a notion that for some ulterior purpose Britannia was refusing to put forth her strength and get the war over. Not that this worried him for more than a moment, for he was always bubbling over with good spirits and prancing about as restlessly as a harlequin. Just now he was in disgrace like a mischievous schoolboy, because he had suddenly embarked on secret-service work and tried to buy one of the employees at the post-office to hand him over the telegrams of the enemy Legations. The whole business had been a childish prank and would have had no importance at all if it had not given King Constantine an opportunity to deliver a damaging *tu quoque* when complaints were made to him about the espionage which was being conducted in his capital by the Legations of the Central Powers. After his *gaffe* over the telegrams Goudim went in for amateur theatricals of the burnt-cork moustache type and left secret-service to his colleague the Commercial Attaché, a round-headed man with a large grey moustache that nearly described a complete circle and made him look like an illustration in a sensational romance of Russian nihilists in the 'eighties. The Commercial Attaché was not a social figure. Indeed, as I remember, he had long retired from the Russian Navy and was in business somewhere in the Levant at the outbreak of war.

I was under an impression formed while I was still at school that the Russian secret-service was the most professionally equipped of all. So, when their Commercial Attaché in Athens invited me to a gloomy house and offered to put me in the way of obtaining the services of the finest agent procurable I blessed my good fortune. The agent in question, whom I called Jack Horner because on the night that Tucker and I were taken to see him first he sat in a dark corner of the room and pulled out spies with such complacent relish, was a tiny man with a completely bald head, a tight dark beard, a tail-coat, and plump little hairy hands that used to creep in and out of a pair of highly glazed cuffs like baby guinea pigs when he sat with his arms on the table and uttered in a low mysterious voice what I presently discovered to be the basest of lies. The first plum Jack Horner gave us was a most circumstantial denunciation of a Turkish spy at Mudros, who was arrested at our suggestion. But when we told the nasty little man to muster the witnesses he had promised for the court martial none was forthcoming. And that was the end of Jack Horner, whose real name as I write these words abruptly comes back to me from the past. Zorki. I have no hesitation in printing it as a trifling satisfaction for the eight hundred drachmas we wasted on the little brute. He vanished from Athens when we sacked him, because he heard that K 69, the unfortunate man he had denounced, was on his way from Mudros to put a knife into him. However, all that K 69 did when he reached Athens was to call on Sir Francis Elliot and ask him to pay his salary while he had been in prison.

After the recommendation of Zorki my awe of the Russian secret-service was dispelled.

Colonel Mombelli, the newly arrived Italian Military Attaché, whom I fancy I met for the first time at the reception that night was a friend from the first and remained

a friend. He with his delightful wife and plump little daughter of fifteen was staying at the Hotel d'Angleterre. He himself was a tall meagre man with grizzled dark hair and a pair of pince-nez which did not detract in the least from his air of soldierly authority, but on the contrary enhanced it. In 1917 he was promoted to be general and left Athens to take over the command of the Italian forces at Salonica. I always found him the quickest of the Allied officers in Athens to grasp the essentials of a situation whether it was a question of politics, or of diplomacy, or of strategy, or merely of routine. The result was that he and I probably wasted less of one another's time than any two people in Greece during those feverish days. What a relief it was going to be when I was working sometimes twenty hours in the twenty-four, to learn that Colonel Mombelli wanted to see me for ten minutes, for I would be sure that the visit really would not occupy more than those ten minutes and that by the end of it we should probably both know better where we were than when he came in. An intelligent, industrious, cool-headed, courtly man with plenty of ambition, but a contempt for intrigue, he was a model of what a military attaché should be.

It may have been at the Italian Legation that I first met Mr. Garrett Droppers, the American Minister, who was like an American Minister in a novel or a play; and, so unerringly did he speak and behave as one expected he would, I ended by finding it hard to believe he was real. I felt like a reviewer who finds that a novelist has not taken the trouble to provide a stock figure with distinguishing life. Before President Wilson made him Minister to His Majesty the King of the Hellenes Mr. Droppers had been a Professor at Williamstown University in Massachusetts, where he was an authority upon International Law, and whence he had brought with him to Europe every New England prejudice he possessed. His life in Athens ap-

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

peared to be a protracted exasperation with the backwardness of Europe. His credulity was excessive and after listening to his tirades I felt I understood a little better that astonishing business of the witch-burnings in Salem.

"Of course in America we can't understand this king business at all. To us it seems kind of mad for educated human beings to have kings."

But there was more that Mr. Droppers could not understand, among other things that various benighted European countries were fighting for their very existence. He had written a book on International Law, and his attitude in Greece during those heartbreaking years remained that of an angry professor who has been compelled to watch a lot of naughty little boys deliberately tearing out page after page of his life's work.

I met many other people at the Italian Legation, but there will be opportunities to introduce them later on, and my most vivid memory of that reception is a conversation with the Crown Prince about the Dardanelles and the late Balkan wars. The impression that remains is of talking about war in the same spirit as two young men might talk about the play of a football game. The larger issues remained in the background, and it was merely of incidents amusing, pathetic, or exciting that we talked. I remember his telling me of being nearly hit by a shell at the Battle of Janina and of the thrilling march on Salonica, and then the conversation was interrupted by Contessa Bosdari who was anxious for the Crown Prince to sit down in order that the rest of her guests might be able to sit down. So I was led away and presented to some Greek lady to whom I chattered commonplaces for awhile. And now the picture of that golden-lighted interior with its columns and marble floor and murmur of French and swirl of slowly waving fans fades into the stars and sapphire of an Athenian night as I walked past a line of waiting cars to see at the end of a

ONE SEPTEMBER DAY

long row the plump form of Tucker leaning against a lamp-post. We got into the car he had hired and were no sooner seated than it shot off in the direction of Phaleron. The wind blew cool and grateful on our faces and the smell of the sea gradually conquered the smell of dust and benzene. Leaning back in my seat, I was thinking that to whirl along this road with the false-pepper trees leaping one by one into a pale green feathery radiance as they caught the lights of the car was the most exquisite motion imaginable, until at about fifty miles an hour we were shot up from our seats by a bump in the road, when I suddenly remembered that we were carrying bombs.

"Tell that fellow not to drive so fast," I said to Tucker. "Remember what we've got in this box."

But you might as well try to catch a shooting star as expect a Greek chauffeur to drive a yard less than forty miles an hour, and the thought of that case of bombs took some of the freshness out of the sea air, so that I was thankful when we stopped beside some steps leading down to a small boat that was waiting for us. We pulled for a couple of hundred yards over the dark oily water of Phaleron harbour, on which the shore lamps were radiating long spokes of blurred gold, until we came alongside the *Valkyrie* which was an auxiliary-cutter of some twenty tons burden. On deck three or four dim shapes of humanity rolled in blankets were sleeping when we passed down the companion to the cabin, where for the first time I saw Rogers.

Rogers was sitting at the table in the middle of that small cabin, looking strangely enigmatic by the light of the smoky oil lamp that trembled faintly sometimes at a gentle movement of the water. Clean-shaven, tanned, with curly brown hair slightly grizzled at the temples, blue-eyed, he seemed at a first glance not more than twenty-five years old, and perhaps it was being actually well into the forties that

gave him this enigmatic look, though indeed when later I had grown to think I knew him really well I discovered that my first impression of him had been the true one. He might have served sitting there in the cabin of the *Valkyrie* that night as a model for a study of one of Conrad's subtle mariners. He was a Dorset man; but the East had taken from him all that Dorset had bestowed save only that complexion as of a ripe October apple. He had been in the Danube trade just before the war, and now with the rank of Lieutenant-Commander in the Royal Naval Reserve he was attached to C's organization as skipper of the *Valkyrie*. I can see him now and the way he looked up at me from under his eyes in that murky golden cabin as if he were asking himself what part I should play in his future.

"Here's the parcel, Rogers," said Tucker, putting down on the table the case of those bombs disguised as coals.

"Are the men aboard already?"

Rogers nodded slowly.

"And you're sailing at once?"

Again Rogers nodded slowly.

"Shall I pay the first instalment down here?"

Rogers rose from his seat and shouted up the companion, down which in response to the summons four sleepy ruffians with tousled hair and fierce waxed moustaches slouched into the cabin. Tucker paid them out in greasy notes half of what they would receive if the Kuleli Burgas bridge were blown up. They counted the notes and retired to their blankets on the deck.

"There's no more you want to say to the men?" Rogers asked.

"No, they've got all their directions," said Tucker. "Well, good luck, old man, see you again soon, I hope. Ching-a-ling!"

With this we left the *Valkyrie* and as we pulled back to the harbour steps in the dinghy I said something about

ONE SEPTEMBER DAY

Rogers being a mysterious figure to captain such a mysterious craft as that we had just left.

"Old Rogers mysterious?" the plump man chuckled. "Oh, he's not mysterious really. But he was wondering who on earth you were and what you'd got to do with it, and seeing that he was so blooming curious I thought it would be rather a lark to keep him guessing."

Then Tucker turned to our chauffeur with the air of Drake landing on Plymouth Hoe.

"Embros!" he commanded tremendously, or in English 'forward.'

We drove back to Athens at fifty miles an hour, and since we had unloaded our bombs I was no longer minding how fast we drove now beneath that great sapphire sky, beneath those fountainous stars.

Somewhere round about two o'clock I sat down in the hotel to do another hour's work at my palsied table, after which on what was now the tenth of September I went to bed.

CHAPTER VIII

BACK TO G.H.Q.

EXACTLY a month after I had left it and on the thirteenth of September I came back to G.H.Q. The incidents of the voyage in the *Imogen* from Phaleron to Imbros elude my recollection, perhaps because I was worrying all the way up through the Ægean lest my first return to G.H.Q. should end in the authorities making other arrangements about my future. Much was changed even to the eye when I landed once again on that sandy promontory of Kephalo and made my slow way up through the lines to report my arrival; but above all it was the profound despondency which clung to the whole place that was so evident. I was glad to find that Darwin, my servant, had been taken on by a newcomer, for I had been afraid he might have been sent back to the Peninsula when I was so long away in Athens. The tent in which Keeling and I had laughed so much together looked depressing without Keeling's shrubbery of shaving-brushes and pyramid of rubber sponges. The social diphthong which had been created by the amalgamation of the Operations Mess and the Intelligence Mess had suffered a diæresis, and instead of that big marquee where we all used to eat together the O people were in one small marquee and the I people in another. There seemed to have been a great deal of getting on one another's nerves since I had been absent. Although I felt guilty to have been enjoying myself so much in Athens during the past fortnight, my tales of absurd people like Clarence were welcome and I was granted that sharpest of

pleasures in the assurance of people I admired and loved being really glad to see me again. I had had several letters to tell me that my tales were missed, but paper cannot smile nor ink light up like the eyes of friends. Yet the dead hand of failure was heavy upon that camp at Kephalo. There was not one who had heard the troops cheering from those transports which sailed slowly out over the blue water of Mudros Bay upon that quiet April afternoon, not one who had seen after that grey and glassy April dawn the sun rise out of Asia to shine upon the landing but knew now that there was no longer any hope of beholding Constantinople. And those officers latterly come from England or France knew it just as well. On them depression already sat as heavily as on those who had started with such dreams.

Colonel Ward was no longer head of the Intelligence. The gruff old Gunner had gone home sick. His place had been taken by Colonel G. E. Tyrrell, a Gunner too, but one who had had more experience of this part of the world, for he had been three years with the Macedonian Gendarmerie and Military Attaché for another four years in Constantinople and Athens. Colonel Tyrrell was far better able to appreciate what was wanted in Greece than Colonel Ward would ever have been; but I sadly missed that look of impenetrable scepticism and blank obstructiveness to which I had grown affectionately accustomed when attempting to put something up to 'Wardie.' I missed that horse-hair whisk with which he used to obliterate his flies as unerringly as with a grunt he would simultaneously obliterate the brightest and most pertinacious of one's proposals.

Guy Dawnay too had gone home at the end of August; but his brother-in-law, Robin Buxton, an old friend, had come out to take up a job as Staff Captain. I used to think as I watched him going off every morning with dispatches for the various headquarters at Suvla how much he seemed

to be walking out from the pavilion to bat on some sunny cricket pitch of ten years ago. The shelling on the beach at Suvla was getting bad. Robin Buxton had had a horse killed under him last week. 'Sandy' Hore-Ruthven had been severely hit and was now in hospital at Malta after a ghastly voyage across the Mediterranean lying upon a truss of straw on deck all the way. And when Robin used to come back to Kephalo in the evening after his round of visits the way he would be telling of how he had just failed to stop this or that shell used to sound like some mad inversion of a sportsman's return home, for instead of having to excuse himself for missing his bird he was the bird.

The day after I got back to Imbros Sir Ian Hamilton sent word that I was to have tea with him and give him the news of Athens. I was shocked by the change in him that this last month had wrought. The disappointment of Suvla followed by long days of uncertainty about the future of the Expedition had told heavily upon the Commander-in-Chief. That fly-blown arid little hut among the fretted shadows of a few starveling trees was become a prison. That poor impermanent little shelter which was meant to be left behind here so soon as of no more importance than the dry pod of a locust-bean had taken root. It was become as immovable as the War Office itself. This cocoon from which Sir Ian had been expecting to emerge so quickly and fly to Constantinople had failed to produce the wings. I did not know when I sat at tea with him that afternoon how near he was to receiving that fatal telegram from Lord Kitchener which announced the postponement of the promised new Divisions and foreshadowed the Salonica landing. It would be deciphered before dinner to-night.

Looking back now at our conversation I realize that in Sir Ian Hamilton's own heart the telegram had already been deciphered.

"Help yourself," he said, pushing across the flimsy

table a plate of cakes that seemed all currants until the currants flew up with a buzz and revealed the cakes. "How are things going in Athens?"

"Well, sir, after the reports we've been having about the anxiety of the Greeks to come in on our side my first impressions of Athens have been thoroughly discouraging."

"In what way, discouraging?" he asked sharply.

I could tell by the tone of his voice that he was in no mood to hear unpleasant facts. It cost me an effort to tell him what I thought was the truth. It seemed so ungracious to come back from Athens whither I had only been sent through his consideration and add my quota of pessimism to the general sum. However, I plucked up courage and went ahead.

"Well, sir, I really don't think there's the slightest possibility of the Greeks' coming in against us," I began.

"Coming in against us?" Sir Ian interrupted. "What on earth are you talking about?"

"Such a possibility is being discussed in some circles," I insisted.

He uttered a contemptuous ejaculation, and I plunged on.

"However, sir, I do not think that there is any danger of that. But I cannot see the slightest prospect at present of their intervening on our side. I've talked to all sorts and conditions of people in Athens from the little shoeblacks outside the cafés to the Crown Prince himself, and it is simply impossible not to recognize that in Athens at any rate the general opinion is that the King is right and that Venizelos is wrong. It's true that Venizelos won the elections handsomely last June; but his return to power was cleverly postponed, and the situation out here has not improved . . . from the point of view of the average Greek, I mean, sir."

"The average Greek knows nothing whatever about the

military situation," Sir Ian interposed with signs of choler rising.

"Quite so, sir," I agreed. "But I'm trying to give you an impression of the present feeling in Athens. I feel fairly positive that, if a plebiscite were taken at this moment, the King's policy of neutrality would be endorsed by three-quarters of the population of Old Greece, and by a great many more in New Greece than any of us seem to think."

"If that's all you've found out from your month in Athens," said Sir Ian scornfully, "you've made poor use of your opportunities. Let me tell you that I have only to hold up my little finger and the Greeks will come in on our side to-morrow. Don't forget I was born in Corfu, young man, and that I know something about the Greeks."

By repeating this conversation I have done an injustice to Sir Ian Hamilton if I suggest that he really believed what he was saying. Even at the time, I apprehended that will not reason inspired his confidence, but for the moment I was nonplussed by what appeared to me a deliberate, indeed an almost insensate blindness to the facts of the situation. However, it was not long before I began to grasp that he had by now reached a point of such extreme nervous exhaustion that, whatever he might himself believe about the worst that could happen, he was physically incapable of listening to an expression of it in words from another. For so many months he had been compelling himself to hope against hope for success out here that the lightest hint of contradicting what he wanted to believe was like a gadfly piercing the almost threadbare cloak of optimism with which he was still trying to shelter his imagination against the ineluctable. No doubt at the time this contemptuous dismissal of what I had been supposing was careful and judicious exploration of Greek opinion piqued my *amour-propre*, and my first impulse was to attribute Sir Ian's reception of my remarks to the opinionated vanity

of a Commander-in-Chief. But if I was staggered for a moment or two by such wilful obscurantism I had enough imagination to understand how much a man in his position must have suffered of ruthless disappointment before he could allow such a comparatively unimportant expression of an unwelcome point of view to sting him thus.

"Well, sir," I said, "you must have much more real knowledge of the Greek situation than myself, but if you are calculating upon Greek intervention to solve the problem of Gallipoli I think you ought to consider the possibility of the country's supporting King Constantine's point of view."

Then to change the subject slightly I related what Admiral Mark Kerr had told me about the Greek General Staff's Plan of Operations for forcing the Dardanelles and occupying Constantinople.

"Did you ever see that plan of operations, sir?" I asked. "Admiral Kerr said it was sent by him to the Admiralty through the good will of the Greek General Staff, and that its receipt had never been acknowledged."

"I don't know anything about its acknowledgment," Sir Ian snapped, "but I do know that it was a rotten Plan of Operations."

And then he went on to tell me why; but of his criticism I only remember that he took particular exception to a proposed landing in the Gulf of Enos which his naval advisers had ruled out absolutely from the start, though such a landing was essential if the Greek plan was to be carried through. Soon I left the arid little hut, and I did not see Sir Ian Hamilton again for many years.

Lord Bertie had just written in his Diary:

There are rumours, well-founded, I believe, of a large French expedition to the Eastern Mediterranean. I suppose that the 'political' General Sarraill will

command it independently of Ian Hamilton, for the French are not minded to waste men in the Gallipoli Peninsula.

I spent most of my time at G.H.Q. working hard with Graves at the various dossiers and files of contre-espionage. In spite of the feeling at the back of all our minds that the end of Gallipoli was in sight, Deedes and I discussed the future on the assumption that it was not. It was unfortunate that neither of us knew anything then about the Salonica business, though if we had, it would probably have made no difference, because the Intelligence at Army Headquarters in Salonica was determined from the first to have nothing to do with the Intelligence at General Headquarters. Still, it is possible that something might have been done to make the work in Athens more effective by a closer and directer co-operation with A.H.Q.

Deedes promised to maintain his monthly subsidy of £150 for as long as he could, even if circumstances should take G.H.Q. to Egypt.

"To Egypt?" I echoed. "Do you mean that there is any thought of evacuating the Peninsula?"

"It may be the only thing to do," he replied.

"But do you believe in this great offensive against Egypt by the Turks and Germans? I believe it's only a bluff to keep troops locked up there which might otherwise be sent to the help of the Serbians and so perhaps bring in Greece and keep Bulgaria neutral."

"Well, whatever happens," said Deedes, "Athens is going to become more and more important as a centre of enemy activities, and if you take my advice you'll try to get your services definitely asked for by V. Then you could be seconded for service under the Foreign Office, and when the situation is clearer next Spring we can get you back if you want to come back."

"Here?"

Deedes did not answer; but his long upper lip lengthened a little.

On the Wednesday night before I was to go back to Athens in the *Imogen* General Braithwaite, the C.G.S., asked me to dine with him in the Operations Mess. About half-past six I had that shuddering stab in the heel which portended a bad attack of sciatic neuralgia, and by the time I sat down to dinner the tendons under my left knee were contracting in spasms of absolutely intolerable agony. I sat on through the meal, trying to talk amusingly about Athens; but my face was growing greyer and greyer every moment, and my forehead was dripping.

"You're looking very seedy, Mackenzie," said the C.G.S. suddenly. "What's the matter?"

At that I gave up and retired from the table, muttering the silly excuses one does when fighting acute pain.

"You'd better lie down," General Braithwaite advised.

So I stretched myself out on a wooden bench which ran along the side of the marquee and lay there listening to the talk and feeling thoroughly tiresome. Val Braithwaite insisted on leaving his dinner and sitting beside me to gaze at my spasms with an expression of perplexed sympathy.

"Look here, old thing, what about getting Hare to come and have a squint at you?"

So he rushed off and came back presently with the Doctor, who prescribed morphine; unfortunately his last hypodermic syringe had been broken some time ago and he was still waiting for a new supply, so he had to give me a morphia pill instead, which he warned me would not work as quickly as an injection.

"Hadn't he better be sent on board the *Imogen* at once?" General Braithwaite suggested.

"But my packing," I muttered in feeble protest.

"That's all right, old thing, I'll do your packing," Val

interposed. "You keep your mouth shut and suck old Hare's pill."

My mouth was acrid with the bitterness of the morphia, but the pain had by now reached that point when a loud laugh is the only possible retort to it. So I kept laughing idiotically, until about nine o'clock two orderlies came with a stretcher and carried me down that sandy slope for the last time. Then they put the stretcher upon the beach for me to lie there until a boat could come off from the *Imogen* to take me on board. The morphia pill was still dissolving slowly underneath my tongue, and in an attempt to distract myself while waiting for the first sign of relief I started to ascertain how many stars I could count.

"This means being invalided out anyway," I murmured to myself.

And Hare who had come down to see how I was getting on agreed.

At last Val Braithwaite arrived to say that all my kit was packed and would be sent aboard with me.

"By the way, here's a parcel," he said, "which I found for you in the Q tent."

But I was in too much pain to care what the damned parcel was, and he put it on the stretcher beside me. How little I thought then that this was the last time I should ever speak to Val Braithwaite on this earth. He was promising to come to Athens for a week-end at the first opportunity; but the opportunity passed, because when Sir Ian Hamilton was recalled a month later he went back with his father, whose aide-de-camp he had been, and when General Braithwaite was given command of the 62nd Division Val remained with him for a while. But the boy grew restless. When only just eighteen he had already been fighting in 1914 with the First Battalion of his regiment, the Somerset Light Infantry, and had gained one of the earliest Military Crosses awarded. It worried him to think

that he was not back with that First Battalion. There was nothing in Val of what the Italians used to call scornfully *figlio di pappa* (daddy's boy). So he suggested to his father that he should take on in his place as aide-de-camp an officer who had been wounded and lost an eye. It was characteristic of Val and characteristic of Winchester that the substitute proposed for himself should be a Wykehamist. General Braithwaite listened to the arguments of his only son, admitted the force of them, and agreed that he should apply to rejoin his regiment. The application was approved and Val was sent to Crown Hill to wait there for reinforcements which were about to leave for France. After waiting for a fortnight he grew impatient at the slowness of the procedure and begged his father to go to the War Office and get his departure expedited. Val, now just nineteen, was distressed to think of reserve officers and officers who had recently been commissioned being posted to *his* battalion while a seasoned veteran of the war like himself was available.

So General Braithwaite went to the War Office, and Val was sent out at once. On arrival in France he like all reinforcements found himself at Etaples where to his dismay he heard that instead of being posted to the First Battalion he was to join the Eighth. This to Val must have seemed like being taken away from Winchester and sent to—well, some other school. He tried to persuade the officials at Etaples what a sacrilege was being contemplated; but the officials lacked imagination, and Val in despair sent a personal telegram to the Chief of Staff of the British Army in France, a boyish and appealing telegram to beg that the plan of sending him to the Eighth Battalion might be countermanded. The Chief of Staff was an old friend of his father's, but we may believe that good William of Wykeham leaned down over the gold bar of Heaven and prodded him with a reproachful crozier. Certainly the Chief of Staff

did intervene. Previous orders were cancelled and Val was sent back immediately to the First Battalion. For a month he acted as Adjutant while preparations were being made for the First of July attack on the Somme. Ten days before the battle, however, Val took care to rejoin his own company, and on the first of July he led his platoon forward. The last seen of him was charging well ahead of everybody else, and disappearing into a German trench alone. From that moment no word or sign of him was heard or found. He must have been blown up by a shell. Of that First Battalion of the Somerset Light Infantry only fifty or sixty came back from this battle, commanded by another young subaltern of the same seniority as Val.

The last picture I have of the boy is a dark outline of his form in the starlight looming above me prostrate on the beach at Kephala ; but it is as he looked in the early days of Gallipoli that I think of him ' sun-coloured to the imperishable core.'

Hare saw me aboard the *Imogen* and by about eleven o'clock the morphia pill began to have its effect. But although the pain was less I could not sleep. Captain Potts came down to the after-cabin of his little yacht and sat for a while beside my bunk before he turned in, shaking his Punch-like head and offering to carry me anywhere I could think of in the ship to feel more comfortable. He was a man of huge strength, as I have already related with anecdotes in a previous volume, and I believe if I had suggested that he should rock me to sleep in his arms he would have done so gladly and easily.

When I was alone and trying to defeat the wakefulness which morphia always inflicts on some people despite its name, I began to reproach myself for the feeble way I had put the case of Greece before Sir Ian Hamilton yesterday afternoon. What I had meant to suggest was that unless we showed ourselves resolved to take Constantinople

Venizelos could not hope to persuade his countrymen into war. What I had said was . . . what had I said? And anyway what did it matter? Nothing I could say was likely to affect the issue. But the less important my undrugged self came to think it in comparison with the pain it suffered, the more important my drugged self found it. In rising superior to pain it fancied that it could solve the whole problem of the Balkans. That drugged self in conquering pain had become lord of space and time and able to pierce the very problem of life itself. It transformed the surface of the globe as easily as by a movement of the body I could change the surface of the bed-clothes.

Soon pain returned to humble the soaring mind, and it was driven to occupy itself again with the tangible. I turned to the parcel which Val Braithwaite had brought down and opening it found that it contained two copies of *Guy and Pauline* which Martin Secker must have posted off to me the moment they arrived from the binder. I could picture him at Number Five John Street, and the gesture with which he would have patted the volumes rather in the way a baker pats his dough before they were wrapped up in the brown paper. This time two years ago we were in the thick of what the Press wanting excitement in the dull first half of September called the Great Book War. Exactly two years ago almost to a day I had been looking at the first scarlet copies of *Sinister Street* and urging Secker to defy the commercial puritanism of the Circulating Libraries which threatened to make it no thoroughfare. There would be little enough excitement over *Guy and Pauline*, and that Secker should have chosen crushed strawberry for the colour of its binding was most appropriate, for as I looked at it now in the cabin of the *Imogen* the book seemed to be no more than that.

Having nothing else to read and being still maddeningly

wide awake, I began to turn over the pages in search of that inevitable misprint and as I read on I was back in yet another September farther still away, back at Ladyham in Burford, sitting in that large bay window, which hung right over the stream ; with a view of the orchard, of the church steeple, of the watermeadows beyond and of the wold rolling across the horizon, and through the stuffy air of the cabin came *'a smell of meadowsweet softening with a summer languor the sharp September night.'* I was *'upstairs in the library again, dreaming the evening away ; and while the lamp hummed slowly and olidly to extinction . . .'* no, it was slowly and oilily which was printed. In a rage with my carelessness I dragged myself out of the bunk to fumble in my kitbag for the duplicate proofs of the book. Could I really have passed *'oilily'* ? No, here it was, *'olidly.'* So it was some too zealous printer's reader who at the very last moment before passing for press must have changed *'olidly'* to *'oilily.'* I had spent the better part of a day in the search for that adverb with which I had hoped to convey the very smell of an expiring lamp, and now to find it changed to such a commonplace, unrhythmical, cacophonous adverb as *'oilily'* threw me into such a despair that I could not read another word.

I lay awake for the rest of the night, indulging in an exasperated soliloquy with that printer's reader.

"But why didn't you look up *'olid'* in the dictionary ?" I was asking him reproachfully.

"It wasn't in my dictionary, Mr. Mackenzie," he explained.

"But good god," I replied, "why on earth *should* I write smoking oilily ? Can't you see that *'olid'* suggests an unpleasant oiliness, a kind of active and malignant oiliness ? What would inspire a printer to misprint *'olidly'* for *'oilily'* ? I read the proofs very carefully and passed them. The blame would have been entirely mine if *'olidly'* *had*

been a mistake. People who thought that I really meant 'oilily' wouldn't have mattered."

"I am really very sorry indeed, Mr. Mackenzie, but I never thought . . ."

"Oh, I realize that you didn't deliberately change one of my words. But I am anxious to make you see what a crime you have committed. If you read that sentence aloud you will notice how difficult it is to say 'slowly and oilily' to extinction, whereas 'slowly and olidly' suggests the effort that the wretched wick starved of oil made to keep alight, just as 'extinction' suggests the smell it made in burning itself out. Try substituting 'death' or 'annihilation' or 'eclipse' and see how it would wreck the sentence."

"Well, of course, now you point it out, Mr. Mackenzie," said the printer's reader, "I can see you meant to use 'olidly.' But it wasn't in my dictionary, and so I thought it was a slip for 'oilily.' And I suppose it means the same thing."

"It does not mean the same thing. Olid means fetid and rank-smelling from the Latin *olere*, to smell. But it suggests by assonance the bad smell of oil. Oilily would have been a disgusting redundancy, a vile pleonasm. What else would you expect a lamp to be except oily? You don't burn vinegar in lamps."

"It's most unfortunate, Mr. Mackenzie. And I did do it all for the best as I thought. Perhaps an erratum slip?"

"Too late. Too late. Brendons had a printing order for fifteen thousand. Besides I'm in the cabin of what used to be the yacht of the British Embassy at Constantinople. I'm in Kephalo Bay."

"Quite. Quite."

"Off the Dardanelles."

"Quite. Quite."

"Though I don't mind telling you that we shall never never get through."

"Quite. Quite."

"But we could have got through if the people at home had realized that oilily is not the same thing as olidly. But they cannot realize anything at home."

"Quite. Quite."

"They cannot even realize that the Bulgarians have already decided to come in against us at the right moment for them. But Sir Edward Grey listens only to the Brothers Buxton and Bouchier and Brailsford and everybody else whose name begins with B. He has B in his bonnet."

"Quite. Quite."

"You're a printer's reader. Why don't you delete all B's? Then you'd justify your existence."

"Quite. Quite."

"We write Venizelos with a V because the Greek beta is pronounced like V. But if you saw his name printed in Greek it would be Benizelos, and it's my belief that if he wrote it that way in English Sir Edward Grey would listen to him."

"Quite. Quite."

"Which reminds me that I have a man in my organization who is known as B. His real name is Tucker; but B suited his figure which tends to be obese. You perceive the point of using obese instead of 'adipose,' or 'corpulent'? Don't change 'obese' which contains a suggestive assonance. However, B shall be deleted. In future he shall be called Q, because thereby hangs the tale which Tucker is always telling."

That imaginary printer's reader appeared at intervals all through the night; but the tiresome phantom, whose head always swelled to the size of a huge pumpkin and burst as a preliminary to its temporary disappearance, did not like the phantoms of Elizabethan drama contribute anything to my knowledge of the future.

It was already light when I fell asleep and dreamed that

I was trying to climb up a ladder to get down a volume of the New English Dictionary from my old room in Burford. My leg hurt so much that I could not climb, and at last, in an effort to reach the volume I wanted, every book on my shelves came crashing down about me. And as I sat up in my bunk waking from this dream the noise in reality was louder than in the dream.

Every gun on every ship in the harbour was firing. Through the port I could see an aeroplane hovering over G.H.Q., the dust and smoke of exploding bombs, and the figures of men running hither and thither in the clear morning air. I clambered out of my bunk to go on deck ; but when I reached it the giddiness caused by the morphia made me lurch about so much and feel so sick that I had to retire below again. The first biplane was succeeded by a Taube, and the Taube by another biplane. It was a noisy and anxious half-hour, for rumour in the shape of the ship's steward came down once or twice to tell me of terrible havoc at G.H.Q. From where I was everything over there looked as usual, and ultimately we heard that apart from a bad mess-up by the Signal Tent, where five of our poor chaps had been hit, no damage had been done. One bomb had fallen just outside the Intelligence Mess and interrupted breakfast. The pain with the obliterating egotism it induces in the victim engrossed me for the rest of the day, and that night we sailed back to Athens. An unpleasant night it was too. The sickness of morphia was succeeded by the sickness caused by the rolling and plunging of a small pleasure yacht in a heavy sea. I was pitched right out of my bunk several times, and my leg resented it very much ; but when with daylight we ran into kinder waters I managed to escape from the self-centred whirlwind of intense pain and recognize that I was not alone in a hostile world.

There were three other passengers beside myself. It was appropriate that my old friend Orlo Williams should

preside over my departure from the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, for I owed it to him that I had been able to get out here at all. Six months ago to a day in His Majesty's destroyer *Phaeton* he had been racing up the Ægean at thirty knots with Sir Ian Hamilton. At three o'clock they had dropped anchor in the harbour of Tenedos. Twenty-four hours later the great attempt to force the Straits by ships alone had failed, and the laughter of the Gods was heard again in Olympus.

It was in the *Phaeton* that Orlo had noticed the second volume of *Sinister Street*, among the books Sir Ian Hamilton had brought with him to read on that momentous voyage in a destroyer whose name was of ill omen to the most dauntless hopes. It was in the *Phaeton* that he had mentioned my anxiety to be doing something in the war and had thus obtained for me an experience of which I was now seeing the end. Yet the *Imogen* rolling down the Ægean was for me another *Phaeton*. Had not Deedes agreed that whatever happened the importance of Athens as a centre of Intelligence was bound to increase? Did not everything favour the job into which by one of fortune's idle gusts I had been blown?

'*This crimson in the Eastern sky, these waves of liquid opal are natal, vital,*' Sir Ian Hamilton was writing in his *Gallipoli Diary* on March 17th. On September 17th I would have written in a similar strain, though the sea between us and the Sporades looked grey and sulky, for with every sea mile nearer to Athens the longing to knock that absurd little contre-espionage bureau into shape was with the intensity of it beginning to defeat pain and sickness. What did it matter if a lamp hummed olidly or oilily to extinction? I was going to drive the Chariot of the Sun, and being by nature as sanguine as Phaethon had not the least notion that it might become unmanageable.

A more practical exponent of aerial adventures was

another fellow passenger. This was Flight Commander Mackie* of the Royal Naval Air Service who was on his way home to bring back some of those small observation balloons whose forms should they ever succeed in floating above Lampsacus might rouse jealousy in the divine Lamp-sacene himself. Mackie was an alert sharp-featured young man of my own age. I was sure that nothing would prevent his bringing back those balloons, if to bring them he had to inflate them himself outside the Admiralty and float away on a north-wester above the astonished gaze of the children in the Green Park. He was chuckling over what he called the cinematograph of Bell Daviest† in a one and a half struttr chasing Madrali the Terrible Turk back to Galatea. That was his view of the air-raid on G.H.Q. that morning. But it was books not balloons that he wanted to talk about on this voyage to Athens, and talk about them he did, though I expect I should have learnt a great deal more from him about balloons, had he only talked about them, than he learnt from me about books.

Mackie had an absurd adventure when he reached Phaleron. He did not drive up at once to Athens, but hired a boat to go and look for the *S.S. Bulgaria*, an Italian steamer in which his passage had been booked to continue his journey. He sailed round from Phaleron into the Piræus, but nowhere in the harbour could he discern a sign of the *Bulgaria*. Finally, he went ashore in R.N.A.S. uniform and rushed about asking people for the whereabouts of the missing ship. Having no Greek all he could say was 'Bulgaria!' 'Bulgaria!' This was hardly the moment for a British Naval Officer to shout 'Bulgaria' in the faces of Greeks, and it was not surprising that all recoiled in horror and disgust from his exclamation. Mackie fearing that he would presently be arrested and interned

* Col. T. D. Mackie, C.M.G., O.B.E., R.A.F.

† Capt. R. B. Davies, V.C., D.S.O., R.N.

went back to the *Imogen* where he found nobody left on board except a few engineers. He borrowed from a stoker a dungaree jacket, pulled the badge off his cap, and drove to the Legation where he asked for me. By this time Mackie was so much excited that the people at the Legation took him for a distressed seaman and tried to send him down to the Consulate at the Piræus. However, presently John Ward appeared and all was well. It turned out afterwards that the *Bulgaria* had been torpedoed and was no longer above water.

Captain John Ward,* the third of my fellow-passengers, was the War Office Messenger that week. We had already travelled up together in the *Imogen* when the conversation had been of Greek politics. He was a man of quick sympathy and easily stirred imagination, and no doubt at that date when it was still seeming possible to recover from the effects of a gauche diplomacy I was eloquent enough. I remember developing the theory that we were negotiating with Greece as if it were a masculine nation and with Bulgaria as if it were feminine, whereas the converse in either case was the right method of approach. I remember too insisting that, whereas people at home only supposed that we were hurting King Constantine's feelings by our manner, we were actually wounding Greece itself. But what I argued has no importance, for during this second half of September the Gods on high Olympus having laughed themselves hoarse over Gallipoli had now decided that Gallipoli was become a bore and looking round had perceived Salonica almost at their feet.

Yet the mind clings to the memory of such talks as those I had with John Ward whose name expresses so completely his personality that I feel it superfluous to add a word of professional description. They seem in retrospect to have put one's conscience right like a good confession.

* Major Hon. Sir John Ward, K.C.V.O.

BACK TO G. H. Q.

There was a moment, one reminds oneself, when all that we could say was said and when all that we said was proved by later events to have been a completely accurate forecast of what would happen. It was at that date a level-headed judgment, given before I was become like everybody else in Greece the prey of faction, prejudice, impatience, and suspicion, before the nerves had begun to sear the brain with their lightning, before that dazzling sun and that intoxicating air of Athens had turned life into a spinning top in one's endeavour to act and think and write fast enough for such a scene.

A fortnight after John Ward had left I received from him a present of twelve pipes, some of which I am still gratefully smoking, and much more coolly than I smoked them during those feverish months ahead of me fifteen years ago.

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

COMPTON
MACKENZIE

Following
"GALLIPOLI MEMORIES"
selected by the Book Society
as "The Book of the Month"

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

By
COMPTON MACKENZIE



CASELL AND COMPANY LTD
London, Toronto, Melbourne and Sydney

First published, 1931

Printed in Great Britain

TO
MY WIFE

NOVEMBER 30, 1905—NOVEMBER 30, 1930

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I	THE BRITISH LEGATION - - - -	I
II	DIPLOMACY - - - -	25
III	POINTS OF VIEW - - - -	45
IV	FRESH FIGS - - - -	65
V	EARLY ABSURDITIES OF SECRET-SERVICE -	107
VI	PERSONALITIES AND POLITICS - - -	139
VII	ONE SEPTEMBER DAY - - - -	151
VIII	BACK TO G.H.Q. - - - -	174
IX	THE BRITISH SCHOOL - - - -	194
X	THE ENTRY OF BULGARIA - - - -	211
XI	STAFF WORK - - - -	240
XII	HOUSES AND PEOPLE - - - -	278
XIII	THE HURRIED DEPARTURE - - - -	307
XIV	BACK IN ATHENS - - - -	340
XV	THE END OF THE YEAR - - - -	367
	INDEX - - - -	395

PREFACE

*I*N the preface to Gallipoli Memories I announced rashly that my Athenian Memories would occupy two volumes. I find now that they will require at least three. So First Athenian Memories only takes us to the end of 1915. I hope to reach June 1916 with More Athenian Memories and December 1916 with Last Athenian Memories, and I still hope to get the first ten months of 1917 into a single volume to be called *Ægean Memories*. I recognize that this volume could have been shortened by omitting a certain amount of retrospective autobiography, but it could not have been sufficiently curtailed to avoid three volumes about Athens.

The material I had for the present volume, outside my own memory, has been very slight. Such letters home as have been kept serve to fix a few dates, but little else; and owing to circumstances over which I had no control nearly every document connected with my work in the autumn of 1915 was destroyed. None is better aware than myself of the confusion in this volume; but, though it offend my sense of form, that very confusion manages to represent my own excitable state of mind better than a more deliberate literary artifice might have managed.

I want to emphasize once more the strictly personal character of these memories of war. The passage of time has given me some detachment, but not enough to warrant any claim to be considered a judicious historian. In recapturing the past I have not been able to avoid recapturing some of the old bitterness and bias. If I have been unfair to anybody, it has been with the unfairness inseparable from personal antipathy.

Here and there I have given real people fictitious names, and I have not always indicated when I did so. Over the transcription of Greek names into English I have followed others, a little lazily perhaps, along the road of inconsistency, and to the scholar I can only offer impenitent apologies. Finally, let me insist that every indiscretion and extravagance is my own, and that I have carefully avoided consulting anybody about facts or theories.

Isle of Jethou,
St. Andrew's Day, 1930.

ΚΟΜΠΤΟΝ ΜΑΚΚΕΝΖΥ

«Ο ΣΠΙΝΘΗΡΟΒΟΛΟΣ» ΤΗΣ ΙΝΤΕΛΛΙΤΖΕΝΣ ΣΕΡΒΙΣ

Λένε ότι ένας κάτοικος του Ούϊσκονσιν, με τη νοοτροπία του μέσου Αμερικανού, διασχίζοντας διαστικά τη Σκωτία, έγραψε στη γυναίκα του: «Οι Σκωτσέζοι είναι ένας παράξενος λαός. Σ' αυτούς οι άνδρες φορᾶνε φουστάνια. Καί φουστᾶνε μέσα σὲ ἀσκοτσάμπουνα...» (ἀσκαυλους).

Ἐάν αὐτὸς ὁ μέσος Ἀμερικανὸς εἶχε συναντήσει τὸν Κόμπτον Μακκένζυ, θὰ εἶχε ἀσφαλῶς ἐντυπωσιασθῇ ἀκόμη περισσότερο.

Ὁ βρεταννικὸς τύπος εἶχε βρῆ ἕνα μνημειώδες ἐπίθετο γιὰ νὰ τὸν χαρακτηρίσῃ. Τὸν ἀποκάλεσε «ὁ σπινθηροβόλος». Ἐκεῖνος πὺ σπιθοβολεῖ, πὺ ἀστράφτει.

Καί ἡ εἰκόνα εἶναι σωστή. Ὁ Κόμπτον Μακκένζυ εἶναι μιὰ προσωπικότης μνημειώδους σταθερότητος, ἀλλὰ καί πολὺ παράξενη συνάντια, ὅπως θὰ ἔλεγε καί ὁ Ἀμερικανός...

Παρ' ὅλο πὺ ὑπῆρξε ἕνας ἀπὸ τοὺς πρωταγωνιστὰς τῆς κινήσεως γιὰ ἕνα ἐλεύθερο κράτος τῆς Σκωτίας ὑπηρέτησε τὴ βρε-

ταννική Μεγαλειότητα στην 'Ιντέλλιτζεν; Σέρβις. Είναι συλλέκτης δίσκων — έχει περισσότερους από 10.000 — και συλλέκτης νησιδων επίσης — κατέχει μερικές στο αρχιπέλαγος των 'Εβρίδων. Έγραψε εγθυμα μυθιστορήματα, «Ούισκι εν άφθονία», αλλά και διδλία πνευματικά, «Ο Καθολικισμός στη Σκωτία». Έγινε πρόεδρος των «Συλλεκτηών σιαμέζικων γάτων», αλλά και πρόεδρος του Πανεπιστημίου της Γλασκώδης. Και όλα αυτά αποτελούν αντιθέσεις που δύσκολα συμβιβάζονται. Ο ίδιος σκιστάρισε κάποτε για τους μεταγενεστέρους αυτό που θα μπορούσαμε να το αποκαλέσουμε ψυχολογικό του πορτραίτο. Ένα πορτραίτο με όξεις γωνίες. 'Ιδού το:

«Στην Ιστορία, οι πιο σφοδρές μου αντιπάθειες πηγαίνουν στη βασίλισσα Έλισάβετ και στον Κρόμвел.

Ο αγαπημένος μου δραματουργός είναι ο Άριστοφάνης. Οι προτιμώμενοι Ιστορικοί μου ο Ηρόδοτος και ο Τάκιτος.

Οι ποιητές της καρδιάς μου είναι ο Δάντης, ο Μπλαίτκ και ο Κήτς. Ο ευνοούμενος μυθιστοριογράφος μου ο Σταντάλ.

Άπεχθάνομαι τα άγρια σπόρ. Το καλλίτερό μου είναι το ράκιμπυ.

Άπεχθάνομαι το γκόλφ, μα αγαπώ το μπιλλιάρδο.

Προτιμώ τις γάτες από τους σκύλους.

Οι αγαπημένοι μου μουσικοί είναι ο Μπετόβεν, ο Μότσαρτ και ο Σιμπέλιους.

Μισώ τους Ιμπεριαλιστές και βρίσκω ότι ο Τζέφφερσον είχε δίκιο και ο Λίνκολν άδικο.

Πιστεύω στην κοινωνική πρόοδο και νομίζω ότι ή λέξις «δημοκρατία», που χρησιμοποιούμε για το πολιτικό σύστημα της Μεγάλης Βρεταννίας και της Άμερικής, ανταποκρίνεται αρκετά καλά στην έννοια που της είχαν δώσει οι άρχαιοι Έλληνες.

Οι Σκωτσέζοι είναι ο λαός που έχει το πιο ανεπτυγμένο δημοκρατικό αίσθημα του κόσμου.

Οι πολιτικές μου πεποιθήσεις πλησιάζουν πολύ εκείνες του Ήμιον ντέ Βαλέρα (Ιρλανδοσ πολιτικοσ) και του Σαλαζάρ. (Πρωθυπουργοσ της Πορτογαλίας)».

Ο Κόμπτον Μακκένζυ γεννήθηκε το 1883 και είναι σήμερα

87 ἐτῶν. Ἐπειδὴ, ὅπως ἐπληροφορήθηκα, συντομώτατα θὰ κυκλοφορήσουν τ' ἀπομνημονεύματά του — ἀπομνημονεύματα μιᾶς μακρᾶς καὶ γεμάτης ζωῆς ἐνὸς γεμάτου ἀντιθέσεις ἀνθρώπου — ἔκρινα σκόπιμο νὰ τὸν συμπεριλάβω στὶς παροῦσες σύντομες βιογραφίες μου, γιὰ νὰ τὸν γνωρίσουν οἱ συμπατριῶται μου.

Θὰ μπορούσε νὰ πῇ κανεὶς ὅτι εἶδε τὸ φῶς τῆς μέρας στὰ παρασκήνια ἐνὸς θεάτρου, γιὰτὶ οἱ γονεῖς του ἦσαν φημισμένοι ἡθοιοὶ καὶ εἶχαν δικό τους θίασο. Τὰ τρία Κ, ὅπως τὸν ἔλεγαν, ἦ πιὸ καθαρά, ἢ Compton Comedy Company. Αὐτὸ ὅμως δὲν τοὺς ἐμπόδισε νὰ στείλουν τὸ γυιὸ τους στὴν Ὁξφόρδη, ὅπου διακρίθηκε εἰδικευόμενος στὴν ἱστορία καὶ ἰδιαίτερα σ' ἐκείνη τῶν τριῶν πρώτων Σταυροφοριῶν.

Ἦταν τότε ἡ ἐποχὴ ποὺ ἡ Βρεταννικὴ Αὐτοκρατορία ἐπρομηθεύετο ἀπὸ τὴν Ὁξφόρδη ἢ τὸ Καίμπριτζ ὅλους σχεδὸν τοὺς ἐπισκόπους τῆς, τοὺς ἀντιβασιλεῖς τῆς, τοὺς πρωθυπουργοὺς τῆς, τοὺς διοικητὰς τῆς καὶ τοὺς πρεσβευτὰς τῆς. Ἀλλὰ λόγῳ τῆς διπλῆς κληρονομικότητός του ὁ Μακκένζυ εἶχε τὸ θέατρο μέσα στὸ αἷμα του. Ἦταν ἓνας γεννημένος ἡθοιοὺς κι' αὐτὸ ἔμεινε σὲ ὅλη τὴ ζωὴ του. Ἡ ἐλκυστικὴ γοητεία του, ἡ ἀξιοθαύμαστη μιμητικὴ του τέχνη, τοῦ ἐξασφάλιζαν μιὰ λαμπρὴ σταδιοδρομίαν ὅταν διαδέχθηκε τὸν πατέρα του στὴν Compton Comedy Company. Ἀλλὰ ἡ σκηνὴ τῆς ζωῆς του θὰ εἶναι πολὺ εὐρύτερη ἀπὸ ἐκείνη τοῦ θεάτρου.

Τὸ 1905, σὲ ἡλικίαν 22 ἐτῶν ἀρχίζει τὸ πρῶτον ἐπεισόδιον. Πανδρεύεται μιὰ συγγραφέα, κόρη πάστορος καὶ τὸ 1908 σκέπτεται ν' ἀκολουθήσῃ τὸ στάδιον τοῦ πεθεροῦ του. Ἀσχεῖ ἤδη τὰ καθήκοντα λαϊκοῦ ἱεροκλήρυκος, μὲ τὴν ἔγκρισιν τῆς ἐκκλησιαστικῆς ἀρχῆς. Αὐτὸ κρατᾷ ἓνα χρόνον.

Τὸ 1911 ἀνακαλύπτει πὼς κυλάει μέσα του σκωτσέζικον αἷμα. Δίνει ἓνα πύδημα κι ἀρχίζει νὰ μελετᾷ τὸ γλωσσικὸ ἰδίωμα τῶν προγόνων του ποὺ εἶναι φοβερὰ δύσκολον. Καὶ γιὰ νὰ ριζώσῃ στὴν προγονικὴ γῆ, ἐγκαθίσταται στὴ σκωτσέζικη νῆσον Μπάρρα καὶ γίνεται μυθιστοριογράφος.

Τὸ 1912 κυκλοφορεῖ τὸ πρῶτον μυθιστόρημά του «Καρναβάλι» ποὺ ἔχει μιὰ «ἀστραφτερή» ἐπιτυχίαν. Πωλοῦνται πεντακόσιες χιλιάδες ἀντίτυπα. Θὰ μεταφρασθῇ σὲ ὅλες τὰς γλώσσας, θὰ

γίνηται ταινία τοῦ θωοῦ καὶ τοῦ διηγουμένου κινηματογράφου, ραδιοφωνικὸ ἔργο, ἀκόμη καὶ ὑπερέττα... Εἶναι ἓνα κλασσικὸ βιβλίο τοῦ εἵδους ποὺ ἐπιτυγχάνει.

Τὸ 1914 θρῖσκει ὅτι ἔχει εὐθραυστη ὑγεία καὶ τοῦ χρειάζεται ἀλλαγὴ ἀέρος. Ἀλλάζει λοιπὸν νῆσο καὶ πηγαίνει στὸ Κάπρι. Ἐκεῖ λαμβάνει χώραν τὸ δεύτερο καὶ ὀριστικὸ ἐπιστάδιο τῆς ζωῆς του. Μεταστρέφεται.

Μέχρι τὴν τῶρα δὲ θέλησε ποτὲ νὰ διηγηθῇ συστηματικὰ τὴ μεταστροφὴν του. (Ἴσως ὁμιῶς νὰ τὸ κάμῃ προσεχῶς στ' ἀπομνημονεύματά του). Ἀλλὰ τὸν ἴδιο χρόνον κυκλοφόρησε ἓνα ἀπὸ τ' ἀριστουργήματά του — ποὺ στὴν μὲν ἀγγλικὴ τιτλοφορεῖται «Απαίσιος δρόμος», στὴ δὲ γαλλικὴ «Ἀδιέξοδος», ὅπου ὑπάρχουν μερικὰ αὐτοβιογραφικὰ στοιχεῖα.

Διαβάζουμε ἐκεῖ τὰ ἑξῆς:

«Δύσκολα μπορῶ ν' ἀποκαλέσω μεταστροφὴν τὴν εἰσοδὸ μου στὴν Ἐκκλησίαν. Στὴν πραγματικότητά εἶχα ἀνατραφεῖ σὲ ὅλα τὰ δόγματα. Ἔτσι προτιμῶ νὰ τὴν πῶ ἀναγνώρισι καὶ ὑποταγὴ, ποὺ θὰ μπορούσα νὰ τὴν ἔχω κάμει ὅταν ἤμουν στὴν Ὁξφόρδη. Ἀλλὰ ὅταν εἶναι κανεὶς νέος ἀναβάλλει γι' ἀργότερα».

Στὰ 17 τοῦ χρόνιου, τὸ 1900, στὸ φῶρτε τῆς «Belle Époque» ἦταν ἤδη ἑφεδρὸς ἀνθυπολοχαγὸς τοῦ πεζικοῦ. Ἔτσι τὸ 1914 ἐπιστρατεύεται, ἀλλὰ ὡς ὑποπλοίαρχος... Καμμιά φορὰ γίνονται: κατὰ τέτοια στὸν πόλεμο.

Ἐπ' αὐτὴ τὴν ιδιότητα στέλνεται τὸ 1915 στὰ Δαρδανέλλια ὅπου πληγώνεται κι' ἔπειτα ἐδῶ, στὴν Ἀθήνα. Κατόπιν τοποθετεῖται στὴν Ἰντέλλιτζενς Σέρβις, ὅταν ἀρχηγὸς τοῦ τμήματος ποὺ ἔχει τὴν ἐδρὰ του στὴ Συρία.

Τὴν ταραχώδη ἐκείνη ἐποχὴ ἡ Συρία ἦταν φοιτῶν κατασκόπων καὶ ἡ ἀποστολὴ του εἶναι πολὺ δύσκολη. Ἐν ταῦτοις τὴν περατώνει ἐπιτυχῶς καὶ παρασημοφορεῖται: ἱππότης τῆς Βρετανικῆς Αὐτοκρατορίας, τῆς Λεγεώνας τῆς Τιμῆς, τοῦ Λευκοῦ Ἀστροῦ τῆς Σερβίας κ.α. Ὀλόκληρη συλλογὴ... Ὅταν πολὺ ἀργότερα δημοσιεύῃ τίς «Ἀναμνήσεις» του ἀπὸ ὅλη αὐτὴ τὴν πολεμικὴ περιπέτεια γίνεται μεγάλος σάλος στὸ Λονδίνο, καὶ στὸ Ἰνστιτούτο τῶν Στρατιωτικῶν θυμῶνουν γιὰ καλὰ, παρ' ὅλο ποὺ δὲν

ἐπρόκειτο παρὰ γιὰ ἓνα σωρὸ ἀπὸ ἐτερόκλητες ἀναμνήσεις. Ὁ ὑπουργὸς τὸν μὴνύει γι' ἀποκάλυψη μυστικῶν τοῦ Κράτους, ἡ δίκη γίνεται κεκλεισμένων τῶν θυρῶν καὶ τελικὰ ὑποχρεώνεται νὰ πληρώσῃ μὲν ἓνα ἐλαφρὸ πρόστιμο, 50 μόλις λιρῶν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ν' ἀποσύρῃ ἀπὸ τὴν κυκλοφορία ὀλόκληρη τὴν ἔκδοσι, πράγμα πού τοῦ στοιχίζει μιὰ περιουσία. Ἀλλὰ παίρνει τὴ ρεβάνς του δημοσιεύοντας μιὰ σειρά ἀπὸ ἀναμνήσεις σχετικὲς μὲ τὴν Ἰντέλλιτζεנס Σέρβις. — «Οἱ τρεῖς ταχυδρόμοι», «Τὰ ἄκρα ἐγγίζονται», πού εἶναι μιὰ σάτυρα τῶν Μυστικῶν Ὑπηρεσιῶν.

Ἡ ὅτι ἦταν «κρατικὸ μυστικὸ» τοῦ 1932, δὲν εἶναι πλέον τὸ 1940. Ἡ ἀπαγόρευσις αἶρεται καὶ τὸ «ἐγκληματικὸ» βιβλίο ἐμφαφάνιζεται ὑπὸ τὸν τίτλο «Ἀναμνήσεις ἀπὸ τὸ Αἰγαῖον Πέλαγος».

Εἶναι σπάνιοι οἱ στρατιωτικοὶ πού εἶναι καλοὶ συγγραφεῖς καὶ ἀκόμη σπανιώτεροι οἱ συγγραφεῖς πού εἶναι καὶ πραγματικοὶ στρατιῶται. Ἀλλὰ ἡ παράξενη φύσις τοῦ Κόμπτον Μακκένζυ συνένωσε αὐτὲς τίς ἀντιθέσεις καὶ δικαιολογεῖ τὸν χαρακτηρισμὸ τοῦ «σπινθηροδόλου» ἀπὸ τοὺς συγχρόνους του. Πολιτικός, εὐθυμὸς συγγραφεὺς, πρῦτανις Πανεπιστημίου, λογοτεχνικῶς κριτικός, ἀπολογητής, δισκόφιλος, ἀνθόφιλος, ἡθοποιὸς τοῦ κινηματογράφου καὶ τῆς τηλεοράσεως, ἱστορικός, ἐκδότης περιοδικῶν, Σέρ... Εἶναι ἕλα αὐτὰ καὶ πολλὰ ἄλλα.

Δύσκολα θὰ ἐπιχειροῦσε κανεὶς νὰ ἐξερευνήσῃ τὸ ἔργο τοῦ Κόμπτον Μακκένζυ. Θὰ ἔχανετο σὰν μέσα σ' ἓνα δαίδαλα. Ἀλλὰ εἶναι ἓνας λαδύρινθος ὀριζόντιος, μνημειώδης. Ἕνα οἰκοδόμημα πού, παρὰ τὴ δυσαναλογία του, στέκεται, στερεωμένο σὲ γερεὲς βάσεις. Μοιάζει μ' ἓναν καθεδρικό ναὸ ὅπου ὀρίσκει κανεὶς μεγαλοπρεπεῖς ἀψίδες, ρόδακες, ἀετώματα, χαμογελαστοὺς ἀγγέλους, ἀλλὰ καὶ σαρδόνιες φιγοῦρες...

Τὸ 1931 οἱ φοιτητὰι τοῦ Πανεπιστημίου τῆς Γλασκώδης τὸν ἐκλέγουν πρῦτανι καὶ γιὰ τὴν ἐπίσημη Ἀγγλία τίθεται ἓνα τριπλὸν ζήτημα συνειδήσεως. Εἶναι Σκώτος ἐθνικιστής, καθολικός τὸ θρήσκευμα καὶ ἀπλοὺς «προλύτης» τῆς ἱστορίας. Διορθώνουν λοιπὸν αὐτὴ τὴν ἀνεπάρκεια ἀκαδημαϊκῶν τίτλων κάνοντάς τον ἐπίτιμον διδάκτορα τοῦ δικαίου στὴ Γλασκώδη καὶ τῆς μοντέρνας ἱστορίας στὴν Ὁξφόρδη. Ἀλλὰ κέρδισε μὲ τὸ σπαθί του τὸ δίπλω-

μα του διδάκτορος της Ιστορίας — αφού του τὸ εἶχαν δώσει — ἐκδίδοντας τὸ 1936 μὲ ἀξιοσημείωτη ἐργασία: «Ἡ Σκωτία καὶ ὁ Καθολικισμός».

Ἀνάμεσα σὲ πολλὰ ἄλλα βιβλία του, ἔχεινα πού παρουσιάζουν ἰδιαίτερο ἐνδιαφέρον γιὰ μᾶς εἶναι ἕνας θαιμιάσιος «Περικλής», «Μαραθῶνας καὶ Σαλαμίνα» καὶ τὸ μεταγενέστερο καὶ σχετικὸ μὲ τὴν ἐλληνικὴ ἀντίστασι κατὰ τῆς γερμανικῆς κατοχῆς, «Ὁ ἄνεμος τῆς ἐλευθερίας». Μέσα στὴν καρδιά του ὁ Κόμπτον Μακκένζυ ἐνώνει τὴν πατρίδα του τὴ Σκωτία μ' ἐκείνη τοῦ Περικλῆ καὶ τοῦ Ἀλκιτιάδου...

Εἶναι ἕνας ἄνθρωπος μ' ἐκπληκτικὴ ἐνεργητικότητα. Τὸ 1952, σὲ ἡλικία 69 ἐτῶν παίζει τὸ ρόλο τοῦ λοχαγοῦ Μπέντσερ στὸ φιλμ τὸ γυρισμένο ἀπὸ τὸ μυθιστόρημά του «Ὀὐίσκι ἐν ἀφθονία». Χωρὶς νὰ λογαριάσουμε τίς τηλεοπτικὲς ἐκπομπές του, τὰ κριτικὰ ἄρθρα του καὶ ὅλη τὴν ὑπόλοιπη πνευματικὴ καὶ κοινωνικὴ δραστηριότητά του. Τὴν ἴδια αὐτὴ χρονιά ἡ βασίλισσα τοῦ δίνει τίτλο εὐγενείας.

Ὅλα αὐτὰ όμως δὲν ἀποτελοῦν παρὰ τὴν περίμετρο αὐτῆς τῆς σπινθηροβόλου προσωπικότητος, τὸ πολύχρωμο περίδημά της. Ἄς ρίξουμε μὲ τελευταία ματιὰ καὶ στὸ βάθος.

Ὅποιος γνωρίζει κάπως τίς βρεταννικὲς πραγματικότητες θὰ παραδεχθῇ ὅτι χρειάζεται ἀρκετὸ θάρρος σ' ἕναν ἄνθρωπο τῆς σειρᾶς του καὶ τῆς φήμης του γιὰ νὰ ζῇ τόσο ἔντονα, καὶ τόσο φανερά, μὲ τὰ λόγια καὶ ἰδίως μὲ τὰ ἔργα, τίς θρησκευτικὲς του πεποιθήσεις, ὅπως ζῇ ὁ Κόμπτον Μακκένζυ. Κανένας δισταγμὸς, κανένας ὑπολογισμὸς καμμιὰ ἀνθρωπαρέσκεια στὸ χριστιανισμό του. Ἡ θρησκεία, εἶπε γι' αὐτὸν ἡ γυναίκα του, εἶναι ὅ,τι πιὸ κεφαλαιώδες ὑπάρχει στὴ ζωὴ του. Καὶ ἴσως τοῦτο, πού ἀποτελεῖ τὴν οὐσίαν τῆς προσωπικότητός του, νὰ ἐξηγῇ καὶ τὴν ἀκτινοβολία του στὴν Ἀγγλία καὶ ἄλλοι.

Ἐκεῖνο πού τὸν ξεχωρίζει ἀπὸ ἄλλους διαστίμους χριστιανούς συγγραφεῖς εἶναι ἡ αἰσθησις τῆς χαρᾶς καὶ τοῦ χιούμορ, πού τὴν ἔχει πολὺ ἀνεπτυγμένη. Κι' αὐτὸ γίνεται ἐμφανὲς ὅταν παραλληλίζουμε αἰφνῆς, τὸ ὅφος τῆς τριλογίας του «Τὰ σκαλοπάτια τοῦ βωμοῦ», μὲ τὴν αὐτοαπολογητικὴ διήγησι ἐνὸς ἄλλου

ἐπιφανοῦς Ἑλλήνου μεταστραμιμένου, τοῦ Τσέστερτον, «Ἡ σφαῖρα καὶ ὁ σταυρός». Γιὰ τὸν Μακκένζυ ἡ θρησκεία εἶναι «ἡ χώρα τῆς χαρᾶς καὶ τοῦ χαμογέλιου». Τὸ χαμόγελο τῶν ἀγίων, οἱ ἐννέα μακαρισμοί, οἱ ἄνθρωποι ποὺ γνωρίζουν ὅτι ὁ Θεὸς εἶναι Πατέρας τους καὶ ζοῦν τὸ χαρούμενο μήνυμα τοῦ Εὐαγγελίου... Ἡ χαρὰ εἶναι μιὰ κατὰκτησις τοῦ χριστιανισμοῦ. Ἕνας ἐγωῖστῆς δὲ νοιῶται χαρὰ καὶ δὲν ἔχει τὴν αἰσθησι τοῦ χιοῦμορ. Ἀμέσως θυμώνει. Κι' ἀκριβῶς αὐτὴ ἡ χαρὰ, αὐτὴ ἡ αἰσθησις τοῦ χιοῦμορ, ἐπιτρέπει στὸ Μακκένζυ νὰ λέγῃ τὰ πιὸ ἀκανθώδη πράγματα μετὸν πιὸ ἐλκυστικὸ καὶ παραδεκτὸ τρόπο.

Ἵπάρχει ἓνα εἶδος χαρᾶς ποὺ φαίνεται ὅτι ἦταν ἄγνωστο πρὶν τὸ χριστιανισμό. Εἶναι ἡ τέχνη νὰ χαμογελᾷς στὴ ζωὴ, ἀκόμη καὶ ὅταν ἔχῃ πάψει νὰ σοῦ χαμογελάῃ. Εἶναι ἡ τέχνη νὰ μὴν παίρνῃς τραγικὰ τίποτε ἀπὸ τὰ γήινα ἐνδεχόμενα, ἀλλὰ ἀπλῶς νὰ τὰ παίρνῃς ὅλα στὰ σοβαρά. Σὲ τελευταία ἀνάλυσι ἡ χαρὰ εἶναι ἓνα γεγονὸς συνέσεως καὶ αὐστηρᾶς προσχωρήσεως στὴν ἀποκεκαλυμμένη τάξι τοῦ κόσμου, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀγάπης ἐπίσης καὶ κατανοήσεως, δηλαδὴ συμπάθειας. Κι' αὐτὸ τῆς δίνει γοητεία. Γιατὶ ὅποιος συμπάθει ἐλκύει τὴ συμπάθεια.

Εἶναι παράξενη ἡ διαπίστωσις ὅτι μονάχα ἐκαῖνοι ποὺ ἔχουν πολὺ ὑποφέρει φθάνουν στὴν ἀγνὴ χαρὰ. Ἴσως γιὰτὶ πρέπει νὰ ἔχῃς ὑποφέρει γιὰ νὰ ἔχῃς ἀληθινὴ καλωσύνη στὴν καρδιά σου.

Ἡ χαρὰ εἶναι ἡ γλυκύτης ἐνὸς χαμογέλιου σφραγισμένου ἀπὸ κατανόησι καὶ καλωσύνη. Καμμιὰ φορὰ κι ἀπὸ ἐλαφρὰ θλίψι. Ποτὲ ὅμως ἀπὸ πικρία. Ἡ ἀγνότης τῆς χαρᾶς, συμπεραίνει ὁ Κόμπτον Μακκένζυ, εἴσχεται στὶς τρεῖς θεολογικὰς ἀρετὰς: τὴν Πίστι, τὴν Ἑλπίδα καὶ τὴν Ἀγάπη...

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

CHAPTER I

THE BRITISH LEGATION

THE British Legation in Athens completely fulfilled my notion of what a Legation should look like. I can imagine no residence more eloquent of its vocation. To turn aside from the garish whiteness of Stadium Street and pull up in the carriage before that mellow house overlooking a large garden shady with dark pines and the feathery light green foliage of false-pepper trees was an experience of which the sharpest savour could only have been tasted after such weeks as my young companion Simpson had spent in his torpedo-boat or I among the tents of Kephalo.

Lovers of the South will agree with me that among the enchantments of tranquillity few exceed in their potency the exquisite peace of a sunny city by-street with a shady side to it about ten o'clock of a radiant summer morning. As richly as the perfume of apricots gathered in boyhood there returns upon my senses as I write these words the smell of the warm stone mingled with an aromatic breath of pines, with acrid whiffs of dust, and the sweaty leather of the horses' harness. Smith, the Legation porter, hurries down the wide steps from the great front door to help with the bags. He is a nutbrown little man, as brisk and dapper as a squirrel; but though he has lived for years in Athens, though he speaks the language fluently and is married to a Greek wife, he has lost none of his intense Englishness and might indeed be a college porter directing freshmen to their

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

rooms. Potts leads the way in, carrying the two largest bags as if they were a mere ounce of sweets. Sells* follows, and I see him now in his white uniform with the golden aiguillettes of a Naval Attaché. I hear him too exclaim upon the heat as he unhooks his collar, and declare that he must get his hair cut at once. And then the big entrance hall of the Legation fills with numerous figures in leisurely light suits of well cut clothes, who have emerged from various doors and seem to be flitting like butterflies round the canvas bags which have been flung down in a heap on the marble floor. I look beyond to where a wide marble staircase sweeps up to the cool intimacy of a seemingly undisturbed civilization above. The magic of ordinary life after those thirteen weeks of active service becomes overwhelmingly alluring, and though, as I tell Simpson, I am feeling like death, I vow to him I will not consult a doctor until I have first seen Athens.

It was at this moment that Rendel† came along kindly to put Simpson and myself at our ease.

"Who wants a doctor?"

"Mackenzie's pretty rocky," he was told.

I insisted that I was much better; but Rendel was firm, and announced his intention of telephoning immediately to his own medical man, Dr. Aravantinos, to give me an appointment.

"To-morrow will do," I insisted a little ungraciously.

"To-morrow is Sunday," Rendel reminded me. "You'd better see him to-day, and then you can lie up to-morrow if necessary."

"Yes, but I may have to go back in the *Imogen* to Imbros to-morrow," I argued. "There's really nothing the matter with me. I'm already feeling much better after the voyage."

* Rear-Admiral W. F. Sells, C.M.G., R.N.

† G. W. Rendel.

THE BRITISH LEGATION

I was as nervous of seeing a doctor as a child on the morning of his birthday party. And then as ill luck would have it I had to ask Rendel the way to a certain place. My doom was sealed. When I came back into the hall he had made the appointment.

"Dr. Aravantinos. 7 Odos Soutsou. He'll see you at eleven."

Rendel had not so long been down from Oxford, and his voice was still contending with the fogs of Isis and Cherwell even in this crystalline air of Greece. He was at this date an Attaché, though he was about to be promoted to Third Secretary. He was at this date an extremely serious, not to say solemn young man who delighted in being helpfully instructive. I was of course only too glad to be instructed, and in the alarming correctness of this new world as ready as a chicken to shelter beneath his wing. And even now, when he is a First Secretary at the Foreign Office, he has preserved most enviably much of that pristine solemnity of youth.

Some of Rendel's colleagues found his seriousness pompous, his affairé manner deedy, and his conscientious enthusiasm priggish. They were bored by his habit of tidying up their ideas at every opportunity, of taking down their opinions and dusting them carefully with the white silk handkerchief of a blameless life. They failed to apprehend what a mantilla of grave romance Rendel had flung over his profession. He would have been dreaming of diplomacy when he was still a boy at Downside, and when he found himself with state secrets in his own keeping he would have been as much awed as we may imagine Lord Curzon was sometimes awed by himself. For my part I rejoice to find a diplomat with so much respect for his own status. I had an ambition once to be a diplomat myself. I used to contemplate spending vacations in Touraine and Hanover to acquire the right accents of France and Ger-

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

many, and I saw myself at the end of a long career, floating like a kite above the workaday world with a tail of secret treaties and an inscrutable expression on my mask-like countenance. I wish I could have had as much fun out of being a novelist, as much as Henry James for instance got out of just being a novelist. No, fun is not the word. Does self-symbolization express with a clumsy compound what I mean?

Erskine* was the next member of the Legation to whom we were introduced. He was the Counsellor, a smallish, finely made man of round about forty, with an air of polite weariness of the war as if it were a woman who would insist on talking too loudly and insistently to him at a dinner-party. He gave the impression that he had grown tired of seeing people like Simpson and myself who, stained with active service, arrived at the Legation and expected entertainment as their right; but on his way back toward the Chancery just when his grey-lined creamy flannel suit had almost melted into the dim coolness of the corridor he stopped and called back over his shoulder an invitation to come and have a talk with him in his room sometime. And so fresh in my memory is the picture of that first visit to the Legation that I can see now the way his face caught the light from the open door and the half-shy, half-quizzical smile on his face which seemed at once an acknowledgment of myself and a comment upon the situation. A dozen pieces of good advice appeared to be simmering upon Rendel's lips, and it suddenly struck me that Erskine was bored by his junior's pastoral enthusiasm and that perhaps some of his apparent boredom with Simpson and myself had been a prophylactic boredom, a kind of cooling dose in fact.

Hicks-Beach,† one of the two First Secretaries, had by

* The Hon. Sir William Erskine, K.C.M.G., M.V.O., H.B.M.'s Minister to Poland.

† Ellice Hicks-Beach.

now crept into the conversation. He was looking up at Simpson and myself with an expression of shocked compassion and saying in a voice that sounded ridiculously gentle for the bloodcurdling text :

"We are making a great mistake by wasting our resources in attacking Constantinople. We must kill Germans. That is the only way to win this war. We must kill Germans. And more Germans. And still more Germans."

After this he wandered off toward the Chancery, apparently bowing courteously to people he might be bumping into through being short-sighted, and muttering to himself as he went :

"The only way. Kill Germans. We must kill lots more Germans. We must think of nothing but killing Germans. We want to go on killing Germans."

Before Simpson and I had had time to exchange a smile at such ferocity of opinion wedded to so tender a courtliness of manner Goodhart* came twittering up.

This First Secretary looked like an aquatint in an edition de luxe of one of Paul Bourget's novels. I had never encountered such perfection of grooming outside the fancy of French illustrators. One would have expected this pink and white mould of fashion, this already slightly, but very slightly, convex glass of form to speak lackadaisically in the way so many of our poor dandies have been made to talk for us in books and on the stage. But Goodhart was the agreeable rattle. He talked incessantly in a series of jerky sentences divided each from the next by a ha-ha fence, and all the time he was talking he suggested more positively the operation of preening than any human being I had met. Rendel looked at him as sourly as a Roundhead.

"Beach wanting to kill more Germans? Ha-ha! I'm getting up another bathing party at Raphina for the next full moon. Such a success last month. I was moved. I

* Heron Goodhart.

don't mind telling you I had tears in my eyes. Ha-ha ! And the water was marvellously warm. I suppose you won't come, Rendel ? ”

“ Thanks,” said Rendel with a gulp of indignation. “ I'm rather too tired after a day in the Chancery to go bathing. We can't all amuse ourselves all the time.”

I did not realize, such an efflorescence of eternal youth blossomed in his cheeks, that Goodhart was so much Rendel's senior. It was only when I heard of their comparative ranks in the service that I realized how deeply Goodhart must have shocked Rendel's sense of the appropriate to put such censorious contempt into his tones. But Goodhart was oblivious of Rendel's intolerance. He was indeed as good-natured as his name and the sharpest criticism he allowed himself to utter in my hearing of Rendel was to wish that he would brush his hair more carefully.

“ After all,” he twittered, “ the Chancery is not a studio. Ha-ha ! ”

Now to Rendel's proclamation of the strenuous life he burred :

“ I must amuse myself. I require it. Ha-ha ! ”

And then he began to flash his nails in the rich light that was streaming through the open door from the sunny street. He eyed them as affectionately as if they were diamonds. His white fingers were continuously and restlessly *en pos* like coryphées pirouetting in the wings before they make an entrance. And when they were not pirouetting they were brushing up that fair moustache, which in spite of the war was still ideally Teutonic and which he tended as carefully as a border of mignonette. Goodhart's preoccupation with his hands, when there were bags to be opened and sorted, way-bills to be checked, telegrams to be enciphered, and perhaps a word of advice to be given to the Minister was too much for Rendel, who was ploughing a straight furrow

through life and had no time like Burns to sentimentalize over this 'crimson-tipped flow'r' in his path. If Rendel had been an ambassador instead of an attaché he would have crushed without mercy the slender stem of Goodhart's diplomatic career.

"Well, if you've nothing to do, Goodhart, I'm afraid I have."

It was with something not unlike a snort that Rendel vanished from the idle scene. But before he went he said to me seriously :

"You won't be late going to Aravantinos, will you ? Because I've asked him to stay in on purpose to see you."

Goodhart was still burbling on. Simpson and I caught each other's eyes, and we both had to look up at the ceiling and smile idiotically in order to afford a faint relief to the inward laughter tormenting us.

"It was too wonderful at Raphina. Mariette was there. She confessed she had a *béguin* for me, and she is much more intelligent than the average cabaret girl. She reads. Oh, yes ! She reads. . . ."

And as he twittered on, flitting from the tale of one *béguin* after another as lightly and inconsequently it seemed as a chaffinch from twig to twig, Simpson and I warmed toward him. We warmed toward his exquisite foolishness as to a character in a book by P. G. Wodehouse. We enjoyed him as audiences have enjoyed Charles Hawtrey or Cyril Maude or G. P. Huntly. He became for us an incarnation of folly itself. He seemed like carnival before we returned to the wind and shells and dust and flies of the Peninsula.

"I suppose you two will be at the Panhellenion to-night ?" he asked.

Simpson looked nervous. He cast, as he himself would have put it, a horny eye upon Goodhart's suggestion. He only had to-night, and he did not want to waste it upon

classical antiquities. Modern Youth was his quest before he found himself once more cribbed, cabined, and confined in a torpedo-boat.

"The Panhellenion?" he repeated doubtfully. "Is that a temple or something? That might be rather bloodsome."

"Ha-ha! The Panhellenion a temple! How delicious! Ha-ha! Mariette will appreciate that. She has brains. She is not beautiful. She is really almost ugly. But she has *chic* and brains. Yes, she will be amused to hear you thought the Panhellenion was a temple. No, no, it's the café where we all meet. *Enfin, on s'amuse, que voulez-vous?* I must run now and see if there are any telegrams for me. We're worked to death here. Ha-ha! Still, I'm thinner. I've lost a pound and a half in a month."

And as he twittered off to the Chancery Simpson whispered in my ear that he seemed rather an extraordinary bird. But we had no time to discuss Goodhart, for at that moment the Minister* himself, papers in hand, came hurrying down the marble staircase. I looked with interest at the man whose signature I had read at the bottom of so many telegrams during those weeks at G.H.Q. I saw that he was spare and taut as a wire rope, that his profile was sharply cut, that his nose was even thinner and perhaps longer than my own, and that he was as grey as Oxford. My first impression of him recalled the Head of a College. No doubt that crowded and heightened experience where most of my seniors had been so unsuggestive of Oxford made Sir Francis Elliot appear academic in contrast to them. And he had that peculiar Oxford shyness in the way he spoke to us two younger men. There was not the faintest sign that he was bored as he so easily might have been by having to be hospitable. I remembered Sir Ian Hamilton had told me that he would probably invite me to stay with him at

* Sir Francis Elliot, G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O.

THE BRITISH LEGATION

Cephissia ; but it had not struck me until this moment that there was no earthly reason why he should. Let this brief glance of Sir Francis be enough for now. Writing as I am of my first sight of somebody whom I grew to know very well, to admire greatly, and to love much, I am feeling the weight of the pages ahead and dread the stilts of self-consciousness. The ink runs thick at such moments. No matter. Sir Francis himself was in such a hurry this morning to get at the bags that he had no time to do more than invite Simpson and myself to dine with him at Cephissia before he was hurrying away to the Chancery. And perhaps a picture of him hurrying along the corridor, papers in hand, toward the Chancery will serve to introduce him as typically as any, for I cannot remember the arrival or departure of any bag in which Sir Francis did not take an intensely personal interest. He was like a boy with a large parcel addressed to himself.

Simpson and I were to put up at the Hotel d'Angleterre ; but we agreed to meet for lunch at the Grande Bretagne. After seeing the doctor I should have to call upon the mysterious V and deliver some letters and messages from Deedes.* I had for mufti only the blue flannel coat in which I had arrived in Alexandria, and it was a hot garment for Athens in this grilling August sun.

Dr. Aristides Aravantinos was as benign as Asclepius the first physician, his demigod, of whom and of his rites in Epidaurus he had written a charming book. I have just taken it down from my shelves and read the kind inscription from the author to his patient of 1915. Already the ink is somewhat faded, but not the memory of the doctor's kindness and care, for which let me add he charged what was really nothing more than a nominal fee.

I still have his account and find that in less than two months he was called upon to visit me forty-one times

* Brig.-Gen. Sir Wyndham Deedes, C.M.G., D.S.O.

and write a report on the state of my health into the bargain.

I explained that morning how anxious I was to avoid a clinic if possible, and finding that I had no fever Dr. Aravantinos agreed to try the effect of two or three days' fresh air with plenty of motoring, provided—and I can see the paternal expression now on that kindly face with its trim pointed white beard—provided I would promise to take a dose of castor oil to-morrow morning and lie up for at any rate one whole day. The trouble was the combination of the dysentery with the cystitis. One malady's meat was the other malady's poison. Still, he would try the effect of some diuretic; but if after two or three days I was no better, why then I should have to go into the clinic. I left the doctor to go and call upon V, feeling that at any rate to-day was my own and determined by the grace of my ills to enjoy every moment of it.

When war broke out V had been one of our Military Consuls in the Levant and after some good intelligence work in France he had been sent out to Athens in February, 1915, to launch a bureau for obtaining military intelligence about the Turks. His first headquarters had been in a small house in St. Dionyse Square, but since May the office had been at 20 Academy Street. V's apparent business in Athens was the administration of a fund for the relief of the refugees from Turkey and Asia Minor. This was the best camouflage that could have been devised, because it enabled intermediaries and even agents, to visit the premises in Academy Street without being conspicuous. And it gave V under his own name and rank a plausible reason for being in Athens.

We all know the feelings that are attributed to some preposterous figure in a detective tale who is on the verge of solving the mystery of some other personage which has been eluding him and us for the stock three hundred pages.

THE BRITISH LEGATION

These feelings were mine that August morning when I reached the house in Academy Street and saw a queue of dejected refugees in all kinds of miserable rags, trailing out along the pavement from the door of the office. I may add that my participation in such conventional feelings is the only contact with reality I have managed to achieve in the few detective tales I have read since the war. Experience may teach us much, but while it teaches it robs us of our illusions. I am now dependent for my sensational reading on Deadwood Dick stories of the Wild West, and I shall not thank the man who robs me of my childish belief in cowboys.

On inquiry at the office of the Refugee Commission I was directed upstairs and found myself in a large room where several people were busy with papers, and typewriters were clicking. Edmonds,* quiet, grave, efficient, and supremely discreet, penetrated the sanctum, which was a smaller room opening out of the large front room. A moment later I was in the presence of V himself. The door between the two rooms closed gently. V rose from his table and welcomed me with that courtly grace and charm of manner which sometimes reminded me of a French marquis and sometimes of a high grade mandarin. He was a shortish man, very neatly dressed, with a round fresh face, a trim moustache, and a pair of the largest tortoiseshell-rimmed spectacles I had seen at that date. Indeed, I am not sure that even in the owl-eyed world we know to-day I have seen any quite so large. My first business was to give him the letter from Deedes with various enclosures.

"Will you excuse me?" he begged with genial ceremoniousness.

I sat down while he dealt with the missive, and thought how appropriate it was that V's window should look out on

* Consul-General W. S. Edmonds, C.M.G., O.B.E.

a blank wall. The viewless pane added still something to the effect of those immense spectacles. V cut the envelope very carefully with a metal letter-opener. Then having spread the contents before him he leaned over his table and with slowly nodding head mastered what Deedes had to tell him.

Presently he looked up and, his wide-open eyes magnified by the glasses and swimming with dreadful secrets, gazed at me.

"Nobody saw you carrying this letter?" he inquired in hushed accents.

"I don't think so. It was in my lining pocket."

I pulled aside my coat to show him the shooting-pockets.

"And they button," V observed in a tone of epicurean satisfaction. "That is just the pocket you want for this kind of work."

I realized that these pockets, which I used entirely for the sake of the coat's cut and the convenience of them, not at all for security, were the best testimonial I could have produced.

V groped for a large pipe and lit it.

"We cannot be too careful in *our* work," he murmured solemnly through a cloud of smoke. "Three weeks ago," he went on, eyeing me with some apprehension for the effect of the shock he was going to administer, "three weeks ago Keeling actually came round here in uniform. I sent a personal telegram to Deedes about it."

I remembered that telegram and I remembered the way Eddie Keeling had said:

"I really think V rather exaggerates all this secrecy business."

But what Eddie Keeling thought in the Intelligence tent at Kephala and what I felt bound to think under the direct gaze of V himself were far apart.

"It was dangerous?" I suggested.

THE BRITISH LEGATION

"It might have compromised the whole Organization," V declared tremendously. "I chose this house with great care. It is almost opposite the headquarters of the Greek General Staff. You see the idea of that, of course?"

"Absolutely," I affirmed, but only able to think of putting one's head in the lion's mouth, which somehow seemed the wrong metaphor to illustrate V's notion.

"The last place you would expect to find an organization like this if it were anything but what it appears to be. The British Commission for the Relief of Refugees. Why fear the neighbourhood of the Greek General Staff? Let them look out of their windows at us. What have we to be ashamed of?"

Then begging me to excuse him he turned back to Deedes's letter. When he had absorbed that part of it dealing with A work or information about the enemy, he called for Edmonds and handed him the inquiries to be worked over in the other room with maps and files of agents' reports. This temporarily off his mind, he gave all his attention to my account of the difficulty we had had at G.H.Q. in getting any evidence from Athens against the alleged spies denounced from there. V agreed that the contre-espionage information had left much to be desired.

"For some time we had to depend on what B could do in his spare time with W to help him whenever he could. Now C has sent me out a special man for the job, who works at that side of the business. But I do not feel quite satisfied with the stuff he is sending in. I have handed over B to him, for as much as he can be spared; but I cannot do without B entirely, because after all the real work of this organization is to find out what the enemy is doing. Contre-espionage in a neutral country is always unsatisfactory. C will never allow much money for it."

V? B? W? C? I was growing confused by this throng of initials.

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

"You'd better have a talk with L about it, my dear fellow," V went on.

"L?"

"That's the man who's doing the C.E. side of our activities. Liebig we call him. I should like to know what you think about him. I shall value your opinion—between ourselves of course. After you've seen Liebig we'll talk over the whole question of contre-espionage again," V concluded.

And then since it was time for me to be meeting Simpson at the Grande Bretagne that first talk came to an end. I can still see V, as he insists on almost bowing me out, before he goes back to shake his head over the problem of how a Turkish regiment which, though last reported near Smyrna, is already engaged with our left at Suvla. I can still remember with a warmth of pleasure the grand manner of V's courteous adieux. And in writing that last sentence there suddenly occurs to me a remark with which V once greeted me when I entered his room :

"I was thinking this morning, my dear fellow, that the greatest asset a man can have is personal charm."

He said it so solemnly, with so much the air of one who has discovered the philosopher's stone, and so readily, alas, do we, or at any rate so readily do I accept a compliment, that at the time I assumed he was alluding to my own manner. But now fifteen years later I ask myself if he may not have been meaning his own, and if the studied and elaborate courtliness of those greetings and the ceremoniousness of those farewells may not have been a deliberate cultivation of that personal charm whose worldly value he reckoned so high. Yet V himself had no need to worry about it, for he was a most lovable man. Among the best evenings I ever spent, I look back on a dinner I had with him when both our initials were forgotten (for let it not be supposed that I was going to be without mine in that

secret alphabet) and when at the Pantheon Restaurant he ordered favourite Turkish dishes and we talked about nothing but life's amenities, of shooting and fishing, of the nightingales and roses of old Turkey, and of the world before the war. It was an Arabian Night repast, and I could fancy that we sat cross-legged in an air cooled by fountains instead of in that garish Athenian café.

But this is to anticipate another wonderful hour of eating when Simpson and I lunched that fourteenth of August in the tempered light of the Grande Bretagne Hotel's dining-room. We felt not very well-dressed for such splendour, and so we took the first table on the left, which seemed to provide the most obscure corner. Nor did we dare speak at first above a whisper, for the contrast with every meal we had eaten for weeks was the contrast of a cathedral in the quiet of a week-day noon with a whelk-stall in Ratcliff Highway. We saw Goodhart come in with two fashionable women and a fashionable young man. We saw millionaires with pointed beards, and the wives of millionaires all pearls and rice-powder. We saw various members of the diplomatic corps, and aiguilleted A.D.Cs. The low murmur of polite conversation for rifle-fire, the faint occasional tinkle of a glass for the havoc of a heavy sea, the swish of a silk skirt for a shell passing overhead, and the genteel pop of a cork for the detonating crash from an eight-inch gun fired from the other side of the Straits. No wonder we talked in whispers. I can still remember the taste of the light clear soup and the eggs en cocotte and the chicken sauté and the veal cutlet. Oh, it was nothing for Lucullus, our lunch, but to us it was of a savour! The prudent friend who had ventured to suggest I should content myself with a little boiled rice and a glass of Vichy that day would have run the risk of being hit over the head with the bottle of Dekeleia wine we were drinking. I do not believe that, if a skeleton Death had drawn near and tapped my shoulder to

bid me beware, I would have desisted from that banquet. I knew I should pay for every drop of that light white wine with agony as of fire consuming my inside. I knew I should pay for every fibre of that cutlet with . . . well, let it pass, I was ready to pay ; and Simpson had the tact not to intrude upon such wilful imprudence with good advice.

After lunch we hired a motor-car and drove to Tatoï. Even as the lunch was a lunch of lunches this was a drive of drives, and that in spite of my having to leave the car every few miles. Tatoï was the summer residence of the King, a demesne of oaks and pines, with a wide well-metalled road running through it, and upon it the hush of landed property. Wherever we stopped it was easy to fancy that we could hear an old cock pheasant calling or the crackling of the twigs beneath a gamekeeper's dignified approach. We found an inn at the end of an avenue and sat outside at a table in the shade of big trees, possessors of this full-scented earthy afternoon, of this landscape rich with peace which we could fancy we had stolen from the salt fume of Helles and the wind-vexed hurly-burly of war. On our way back we got out of the car and stared for a quarter of an hour at an immensely wide landscape of such incomparable beauty that if Pallas Athene had bidden me look upon Medusa's head and be turned to stone I would not have repined, for though I should still be standing there I should still be marvelling. No wonder the Greeks never bothered to write about natural scenery, but thought only of how from marble they might hew shapes of men and gods worthy of their setting. No wonder that even the poetry of Euripides seemed vulgar in such a land by affronting it with recognizable figures of the humanity that dwelt therein. Mountains, sea, and Attic plain were spread before us in an atmosphere so crystalline and so jealous of perfect form that when I first came back to Southern Italy from Greece I was amazed at the softness of a blue sky I had

THE BRITISH LEGATION

once considered fervid, at the milkiness of an air I had once fancied clear. I linger again with that prospect before me, loath to turn from it until I have captured the essence of it in words. Just as Simpson and I were getting back into the car there came round a bend in the road an obviously English nurse with a perambulator and children. Our chauffeur saluted, and we realized that these were the Royal children. So we too saluted, and as we turned the corner of the bosky road we looked back and saw that they were waving us on our way.

When we left behind the slopes of the Parnes and reached the dusty populous road leading out of Athens I began to feel that the effort I had made was likely to be too much for me, and by the time we were back at the Hotel d'Angleterre my knees were so groggy that I felt I must lie down. The prospect of going out to dine at Cephissia with the Minister was impossible to face. I asked Simpson to make my apologies, but promised that if I recovered later I would join him at the Panhellenion.

My room at the Angleterre was a small one looking down into a narrow side street out of Hermes Street, the Bond Street of Athens; but it was high up, and from the window I could see against the sky the Acropolis over a huddle of brown-tiled roofs. Suddenly, while I was lying on my bed in considerable pain the room was filled with an unearthly rosy light, and the white houses opposite were stained as if by fire. I jumped from the bed.

"The violet crown! 'Ιοστέφανοι 'Αθῆναι! Violet-crowned Athens!"

All my life I had taken the epithet for granted. Had it not been useless for iambs I should without doubt have used it at school if not for a city certainly for some goddess. However, as I never reached the status of writing anapaestics, my masters were spared the stock epithet that made Aristophanes sneer at the deputations from other cities

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

who used it when they wished to flatter the Athenians into some concession. But when the triteness of an epithet is due to its perfection, and when the perfection of it is revealed to the eye for the first time, that is an experience which kindles like poetic fire. Assuredly it burnt me so fiercely that my own poor little bonfire of pain was forgotten, and I think that never once did I watch without wonder that violet light immediately after sunset which irradiates Hymettus, irradiates for a few minutes roofs and columns and the faces of human beings, and then in a moment surrenders to the greyness of the swift dusk. Beholding this miracle of lovely colour for the first time, I became suddenly seized with a fear that I was going to be so ill that perhaps I might die without having stood before the Parthenon. I determined to drive up at once to the Acropolis in this radiance of rosy-violet; but when I reached the door of the hotel, the light had faded and I returned in the lift to my room where presently I fell asleep, only to be woken by some of those minute bugs of whose ferocity I had had a taste at Mytilene last month. However, with the help of electric light I discouraged them and slept on till about eight o'clock when I heard the brazen voice of Captain Potts of the *Imogen* summon me from sleep to go and dine with him. In my small bedroom he looked huge. But I was feeling better after my rest and taking his arm, which was like holding on to the bough of a tree, I walked downstairs.

I met a lot more people that evening, but they must wait their turn for some less confusing occasion than a crowded Athenian café, and indeed I remember most vividly my first experience with the irrepressible little Athenian *loustroi* or shoeblacks. Carrying their equipment as the camel its hump, they insinuate themselves underneath the table at which one is eating or drinking and seize any unoccupied foot as a dog might seize a dropped bone.

Before the owner has time to protest the polish is dabbed on and the brushing begins. The ingenuity of the proceeding is that the polish is so sticky that with the dust of Athens the boots require cleaning again an hour later. When these *loustroi* grow too big to crawl under café tables they emigrate to America where, fortune favouring them, they acquire shoe-shine parlours of their own in which they polish the boots of the American citizen with the same sticky mixture and so compel him to have them re-polished every two or three hours. I always attributed the heavily padded toecaps which Americans formerly affected to the strain upon the extremities caused by the repeated brushing they had to undergo to keep their boots untarnished. Not having learnt yet how to drive away these pertinacious little creatures with the right objurgations in Greek, I probably had my boots polished quite half a dozen times that first evening.

Simpson turned up from dinner with the Minister about midnight when the café was beginning to fill up. With the prospect of being confined to his torpedo-boat for weeks to come he was anxious to outvie even the Athenians in turning night into day. Goodhart had introduced him to Mariette who was slim and dark, and somebody else had introduced me to a Roumanian who was large and fair, and the Roumanian had introduced to the party one of those anonymous friends who lean back from the general conversation and yawn gently to themselves, but who somehow are the last to leave. A drive to Old Phaleron was suggested, and Simpson, thinking of his torpedo-boat and I of my castor-oil in the near future, we clung together like two condemned criminals to our last night. We decided a drive to Old Phaleron would be a capital end to this long day robbed from admirals and doctors. However, when the car was fetched, everybody else, after declaring that it was a most delicious experience to visit the hotel and eat supper

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

by the edge of the sea, backed out of the expedition on the plea of to-morrow's hard work. So in the end Simpson and I took Mariette, the large Roumanian, and the languid anonymous friend. It must have been two o'clock by now, and when we reached Old Phaleron we tried to think that it really was a delicious experience to sup in the marine pavilion, which was a large jetty through the planked floor of which the sea glimmered oilily. There was a roof; but the sides were open to the bay, and the table-cloths and napkins were sodden with sea-damp. The moon had set hours ago. It became more and more tiring to talk French. The only compensation for me was that I felt too ill to drink the sweet champagne and looked too ill to give any offence thereby. I suppose it was about half-past three or four o'clock when we gave up pretending that this damp jetty was as *ravissant* as Mariette insisted on declaring that it was. Yet this jetty was to take its place in history, for it was from here that M. Venizelos and Admiral Coundouriotis embarked on the night of the twenty-fifth of September, 1916, and from here that they sailed to proclaim the Provisional Government in Crete.

When we reached the waiting car, the gimcrack summer villas of Old Phaleron were emerging like ghosts from the smoky blue of dawn. It was a deceptive twilight though, and the chauffeur, starting his car at full speed in the Mediterranean chauffeur's way, misjudged the distance of a country-cart which had swerved across the road in front of him, ran right into it, and tilted the four occupants head over heels into the dust. The Roumanian blonde shrieked that we were all dead. The anonymous friend scrambled out over the back of the car, and, lifting her skirts as if against the onslaught of a thousand rats, stood screaming in the road. Mariette with the practical wisdom of the Frenchwoman in an accident, should she be successful in avoiding hysterics, stood on the seat of the car and

harangued two policemen who had apparently been woken from sleep in a front garden, for they appeared like conjured spectres from the ground itself. The chauffeur wept and appealed to Simpson and myself not to abandon him. As for the four peasants, two men and two women who had been driving in the cart, their united noise was beyond the English language ; it would take the genius of Aristophanes for onomatopoeics to express it. So far as we could ascertain, the peasants were only slightly bruised and scratched; but, as they had been rolling about in hundreds of upset tomatoes, they looked as if they had been cut to pieces. The most sensible creature was the horse who was placidly eating some of the spilt greenstuff intended for the market. The shafts of the cart were broken ; but otherwise it did not seem much damaged.

The decision of the police was that we must all go to the police-station in New Phaleron and make our depositions to the head man there. How far away was that ? It was just round the bay. Well, we would drive there in the car. Not at all. The car was under arrest, and nobody except the chauffeur could be allowed to drive in it. Why ? Shrugs of shoulders. Apparently the law of Greece was that, when a chauffeur was arrested for driving a car to the common danger, the car was presumed to share his guilt and must be taken to the police-station there to explain its behaviour. So off it started round the bay with the two policemen standing on the footboard. Even they could not get inside and sit back like passengers. Such was the law. There is no doubt that the cart would have been arrested and taken to the police-station too, if there had been enough string to splice the shafts ; but it had to be left under the guard of another policeman who had materialized and the horse was arrested instead, to be led along by still another policeman and explain itself in New Phaleron.

How the victims of the accident reached the police-station

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

was never found out. I do not believe that any place has ever seemed so far away as that police-station at New Phaleron came to seem that morning. As the sky grew lighter and lighter the bay grew larger and larger. What annoyed Simpson particularly was that in a few hours he would have to come back to Phaleron Bay from Athens in order to go aboard the *Imogen*. I have just looked up what Baedeker has to say about the distance between the two Phalerons. He declares that from Old Phaleron New Phaleron can be reached on foot along the coast in three-quarters of an hour. Can it? Not by a naval lieutenant and a synthetic marine trailing three *diseuses* behind them through the rosy-fingered dawn after a motor smash. It was past six o'clock when we reached the police-station of New Phaleron; and when we did reach it it was locked. Through the medium of Mariette's Franco-Greek I asked one of the policemen who after all had been driven here, albeit standing on the footboard of the car, why he had not roused the head official, and we were told that he was now on his way to investigate our case. At last he arrived, one of those unshaven Mediterranean officials who seem to have been hatched in the dusty cracks of their own office floors like fleas. He went behind a counter and began his interrogation of the chauffeur, who took a long time with his evidence because after every statement he appealed to us to bear him out, and this meant a great deal of translating. Moreover, as usual, the Mediterranean ink was hiding in a corner of the Mediterranean inkpot and had to be coaxed out with the Mediterranean pen like a wrinkle out of its shell, after which the pen would trip up over a hair in the paper and the ink would escape through to the other side. When the chauffeur's evidence had been taken, our evidence was taken together of course with our family genealogies. It was half-past seven by the time that pen had scratched the last sentence; but when we proposed to drive back at

once to Athens, the official shook his head. To begin with, the car must remain in New Phaleron, and secondly we must wait until the victims arrived to give their evidence. At present their wounds were being attended to in a neighbouring pharmacy.

Half-an-hour dragged by, and then the victims arrived. First came the old peasant who had been driving. He entered with his foot in a sling, swathed in bandages, supported by a pair of crutches, and uttering terrible groans. He was followed by one of the females whose weather-beaten face was covered with crosses of sticking-plaster and who was evidently trying to groan appropriately, but who on account of some lack of vocal or stomachic control could only succeed in emitting a series of ungovernable sonorous belches. They were volcanic. Typhoeus himself groaning beneath the weight of Etna and making a noise, according to Hesiod, between the voice of the gods, the roaring of a lion, the bellowing of a bull, the howling of a dog, and the pipe of a whistle would have been shamed into quiescence by the stupendous eructations of that patched up and hideous female. The echo of them is still in my ears. The other two victims were bandaged and plastered to match their leaders and groaning not less lugubriously. The first thing they all did after limping into the office was simultaneously to thrust their eight hands with outspread fingers into the face of the chauffeur in the conventional gesture of Greek execration. And then their evidence was taken. As this had to be contradicted almost word by word it wasted another hour, and it was nine o'clock before we reached the station to take the steam-tram to Athens.

I was feeling so ill by now that I did not mind how much people stared at us on that Sabbath morn. I did not mind who or what they thought Mariette was or the Roumanian blonde or the anonymous friend, who or what they thought

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

Simpson and I were. I felt utterly indifferent to the fate of the chauffeur who had remained behind under close arrest. When we reached Athens, we put the *diseuses* into a carriage, dispatched them to whatever *pension d'artistes* they lived in, and drove back ourselves to the hotel. Simpson dashed upstairs to collect his things, and within twenty minutes he was on his way back to Phaleron to go on board the *Imogen*. The fortune of war did not bring us together again. As for me I took that dose of castor-oil and slept till lunch time.

CHAPTER II

DIPLOMACY

IT will be as well to diverge for a few pages from a personal narrative and try to recapitulate as fairly as possible the recent history of the Balkans which had created the position I found in Greece when I landed there in this month of August, 1915.

We may look back to September 6th, 1913, for a significant omen of the state of affairs which would develop in Athens during the years of the Great War, for that was the fatal day when King Constantine received at Potsdam from the Kaiser the baton of a German Field-Marshal, the Collar of the Black Eagle, and the Colonelcy of the 2nd Nassau Infantry Regiment. These military honours might not have achieved more prominence than the usual conventional compliment which one Sovereign pays to another, if King Constantine, when returning thanks, had not made that speech so widely circulated through the Press of Europe, in which he attributed the Greek victories during the late wars with Turkey and Bulgaria to the principles of warfare that he and his officers had learned from the Prussian General Staff. Considering that the Greek Army had been reorganized by a French military mission which his Prime Minister, M. Venizelos, had summoned to Greece, this was a tactless speech. But it was also vainglorious and untrue. Had it not been for Venizelos, King Constantine, then Crown Prince, would have turned aside at a critical moment in the campaign against the Turks to attack Monastir, and the Greeks would never have taken Salonica. As it was,

they only occupied the town for a few minutes before the arrival of the tired and dusty vanguard of the Bulgarian army. From the first Venizelos had pressed upon the General Staff the need to urge the Crown Prince forward. When after the victory of Sarandaporon he was hesitating, the inspired Cretan telegraphed to King George that the Crown Prince would be held responsible if Salonica were lost. His eldest son should have all the glory and redeem the ruin of his military reputation in 1897; but he must take Salonica.

The hatred which deepened in Constantine for Venizelos was in part the hatred of a debtor for the man who has put him under an obligation. The tooth of such hatred is sharp, and the existence of it must be grasped by those who wish to appreciate the political position in Greece during the Great War. It is the key to the situation.

Venizelos was so much perturbed by what might be the effect of the Potsdam eloquence that he returned from his rest-cure at Loutraki in order to give the French Chargé d'Affaires in Athens a solemn assurance that the royal words lacked political significance. A paragraph was inserted in the *Hestia*, the chief Government organ, to point out that the King had not been accompanied to Potsdam by a responsible Minister and that the foreign policy of Greece was unaffected by his utterance. It would be too much of an assumption to discover in that indiscreet speech of King Constantine a determination to help Germany during the war. A political bias may have existed. No doubt it did; but the real inspiration of his words was an ebullient complacency, for that baton had given him as much pleasure as a schoolboy gets from his cricket or football colours. I was told by one of his aides that entering a room unexpectedly he found the King dressed in his Field-Marshal's uniform and posing before a full-length mirror with the baton, like a debutante in her presentation frock

DIPLOMACY

I withhold my informant's name, but by the way he imitated his August Master's demeanour before that mirror I could feel sure he was not inventing a malicious tale. There was, moreover, as he told it, something delightfully human about the King's naïve pleasure in his grand new Prussian appearance. But he should not have made a speech about it. The French themselves are vain, and they never forgave him for his words.

During the first half of 1914 the fears, ambitions, and mutual jealousies of the Great Powers prevented any real settlement of the Balkans. There was always the danger of war breaking out again between Greece and Turkey, and as late as July Venizelos was on his way to meet the Grand Vizier in some northern city where they might in comparative coolness attempt to settle the outstanding problems between their two countries. By the time he had reached Munich there were graver problems before him. The Great War was about to begin.

The Greek Minister for Foreign Affairs at this date was Doctor Georges Streit, a grandson of one of those Bavarians who had come South in the train of King Otto. On July 29th he telegraphed to Venizelos an official intimation from Berlin that Germany would fight on the side of Austria should war follow the ultimatum to Serbia. Dr. Streit added they had been given to understand that Bulgaria and possibly even Turkey would take advantage of the situation to ally themselves with Germany. Thus it seemed desirable that Greece should disengage herself from her pact with Serbia as soon as possible, and that some arrangement should be reached by which Turkey and Greece pledged themselves to neutrality. What course did the President of the Council advise? On the following day Alexandropoulos, the Greek Minister at Belgrade, telegraphed at the instance of Pachich, the Serbian Premier, to find out what action Greece would take if Serbia were attacked by

Austria, and also if she were attacked by Bulgaria. It was certain that Montenegro would fight on her side, though this was of slight importance compared with the information that Russia had positively decided to support Serbia with force of arms. Venizelos replied from Munich that he must reserve his decision on the question of Greek help in an Austro-Serbian war, but that if Serbia were attacked by Bulgaria he should propose to King Constantine and the Government an immediate mobilization against Bulgaria in order to maintain the Treaty of Bucharest and to relieve Serbia from any anxiety about her right flank. To the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Athens he telegraphed in a similar strain.

Venizelos telegraphed further from Munich to Streit that he considered the Pact between Greece and Serbia did not compel her to fight actively on the side of Serbia against Austria, although it did demand the mobilization of 40,000 men. Notwithstanding, he thought it would be in the common interest that Greece should not mobilize immediately for fear of provoking a general mobilization in Bulgaria and thus possibly precipitating a very grave conflict which might still be avoided. Streit was to inform Alexandropoulos in Belgrade accordingly, but at the same time instruct him to assure the Serbian Government that in the event of a Bulgarian mobilization Greece would herself mobilize immediately. He was to point out too that the Greek attitude corresponded with the attitude the Serbian Government had adopted recently when confronted by the prospect of war between Greece and Turkey. He went on to urge that an understanding should be reached at once in order that Sofia might understand what was involved by any armed threat to Serbia. Then he pointed out the possibility of the war's becoming general and the need to decide at once upon the inclination of Greece in such an event. He expressed his firm opinion that in no circum-

stances whatsoever could Greece ally herself with the group of Powers opposed to Serbia. Such an alignment would imperil the vital interests of Greece, would violate the sanctity of treaties, and strike at the dignity of the State. And he finished this telegram by affirming that nothing would ever induce him to swerve in the slightest degree from such a policy.

So, on August 2nd Streit notified Belgrade that Greece would adopt toward Serbia an attitude of most benevolent neutrality and hold herself ready to repel any Bulgarian attack upon her ally. He stressed the point that active co-operation against Austria at this moment would do more harm than good, by exposing Salonica to attack and thus closing the only port through which Serbia could be re-victualled. A Cabinet Council was held under the presidency of the King, and this communication was repeated to all Greek Ministers abroad with a further proviso that, should Bulgaria intervene in the war, Greece would intervene in concert with Roumania. Austria accepted this statement of the Greek position and gave an undertaking not to help Bulgaria in the event of a Greco-Bulgarian war.

Meanwhile, on July 31st, the Kaiser had sent a strongly worded personal appeal to King Constantine to join up with Germany. Disregarding the general belief that the assassination of King George at Salonica had been instigated by Austria, he actually called upon Constantine to remember that his father had been murdered by the Serbs. Finally the Kaiser threatened him with a simultaneous attack by Italy, Bulgaria, and Turkey if Greece disappointed him by taking the other side, in which case he must not expect his brother-in-law to do anything to save him or his country. On August 2nd the King declared in response to this communication that the interests of Greece demanded absolute neutrality and the maintenance of the *status quo* in the Balkans established by the Treaty of Bucharest. He added

that Greece would act in concert with Roumania and prevent Bulgaria from trying to annex territory recently conquered by Serbia. Such an aggrandisement of Bulgaria could only end with Russia predominant in the Balkans. The Kaiser scribbled a number of uncomplimentary remarks about his brother-in-law's policy, in the margin of this telegram, which was found after the war among the archives of the Berlin Ministry for Foreign Affairs and was published in the *Matin* during the winter of 1920.

On August 4th the Kaiser told Nicolas Theotokis, the Greek Minister in Berlin, to inform King Constantine that an alliance had been concluded that day between Germany and Turkey, that Bulgaria and Roumania were aligning themselves beside the Central Powers, and that the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* had been ordered to join the Turkish Fleet. This communication wound up with an emotional appeal from the Kaiser to King Constantine as a comrade, as a German Field-Marshal, and as a brother-in-law, to mobilize the Greek Army and march beside himself.

Much has been made, by recent apologists, of King Constantine's anxiety to put all his available information about German intentions at the service of the Allies. So far as I am aware none of the information contained in this telegram was communicated, and I should certainly have heard from Admiral Mark Kerr, the head of the British Naval Mission in Greece, if he had been authorized to warn the Admiralty about those orders given to the two German warships. It should of course have been obvious that the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* then at Messina would make for the Dardanelles under full steam. There were only two alternatives—to escape into the open Atlantic where their existence afloat could only have been a matter of days, or to take refuge in Pola, which Austria, anxious to avoid war with Great Britain, had forbidden. One asks what course events would have taken if war with Austria had been

avoided and the German ships sunk off Constantinople in full view of the population. It would be idle to pretend that there would have been any likelihood of the least attention's being paid to a warning from King Constantine about the destination of the *Goeben* and the *Breslau*. Still, such a warning sent through Admiral Kerr would have established unassailably the sincerity of his good will toward the Entente. The offer of the Greek plan of operations to force the Dardanelles of which so much has been made by Admiral Kerr was after all only the offer of an opinion, and as the Scots judge said, 'paternity is a matter of opinion, but maternity is a matter of fact.' As it was, both the German warships coaled at Syra with the help of Greek lighters,* while Sir Berkeley Milne and his squadron were rushing about at the other end of the Mediterranean like a pack of beagles which has been allowed by the Whip to follow the scent of a rabbit instead of the authentic hare. As a matter of fact somebody at home did apparently have a notion that the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* might enter the Ægean, for a telegram was sent to W. H. Hastings, the British Consul at Syra, telling him to keep a look out for them. So, as dear old Hastings himself told me, he used to start away every morning in the heat and sit on the arid cliffs of Syra gazing out to sea for the German warships through a small telescope, 'though,' as he added, 'what I was expected to do if I saw them I don't know.'

Presently he had the melancholy pleasure of telegraphing to the British Legation in Athens that they were being coaled in the harbour of Syra itself.

Overlooking that harbour there was a large public asylum, and in 1917 I used to dream in moments of more

*I was told in Syra that a Greek destroyer helped, but I could not confirm this. However, everything was done to keep Admiral Coundouriotis occupied while the German ships went through.

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

acute exasperation that I had been given the power to intern in that bleak building some of the prominent figures of the war. It would have been an admirably appropriate spot.

In a Chronology of the War issued under the auspices of the Ministry of Information we read :

"August 5th. *Breslau* chased into Messina harbour by British cruisers. Owing to misunderstanding she escapes with *Goeben*, August 6th."

Misunderstanding has a delicate Chinese politeness. The Mediterranean becomes a willow-pattern plate.

Theotokis saw von Jagow, the German Foreign Secretary, after his Imperial audience, where the information he had been given by the Kaiser was confirmed. Theotokis himself urged the King to consider most carefully what the consequences might be if Greece failed to join Germany. King Constantine replied that, while the Kaiser knew how much his personal sympathies and political ideas inclined him toward the side of Germany, he could not after much reflection see his way to mobilize his army immediately, because the Mediterranean was at the mercy of the British and French fleets. They could destroy the Greek Mercantile Marine, occupy the Greek islands, and prevent the concentration of his army, which owing to the absence of railways, could only be effected by sea. He justified this to Admiral Kerr by telling him that he did not want to be bothered any more by the Kaiser and so was only pretending to be on his side. It must have been about now that some smart Roumanian journalist invented what was declared to be a fictitious telegram from the Kaiser to Queen Sophie, which warned her of a brother's wrath should Greece misbehave, and which ended with the words, 'Love to Tino.'

The dignity of King Constantine was finally impaired by that devastating diminutive. From the moment the comic papers of the Entente began to refer to him as Tino in

their cartoons, all hope of his changing his mind was lost. Nothing could have been so galling to his vanity as the publication of that pet name, for though the telegram was almost certainly fictitious he really was called Tino in the family circle. The telegram from the Kaiser urging his soldiers to exterminate the contemptible little British army was also apocryphal; but the effect of its publication was tremendous. The world felt that he might have said it. Big Willie, Little Willie, Ferdie, none of these vulgar abbreviations caught the popular fancy like Tino. They were too obviously invented. Tino rang true, and at the same time it struck the man in the street as an exquisitely absurd name for a King. Somebody should write an essay on the influence of ridicule on the history of the human race. What is the power of Mr. Lloyd George? His capacity for making his opponents ridiculous. What was Disraeli's? The same. Why are the Jews with justice the Chosen Race? Because they have a superb sense of the ridiculous.

‘How odd
Of God
To choose
The Jews,’ the poet sang.

Not at all. They are more acutely aware than any race of the Divine absurdity of the universe. And what on the whole is the most responsive audience to a master of ridicule? An audience gathered from the Cockney heart of the British Empire. If King Constantine could only have ‘marched,’ with what affection he would have been regarded by the British Tommy. Tino would then have become as much a source of strength as it had been of weakness. Perhaps the last thing forgotten about the Great War will be that the King of Greece was called Tino. And yet he was to become a tragic figure in the grand style.

Theotokis from Berlin continued to proclaim the invulner-

ableness of Germany. In his anxiety for the future of his country he went so far as to advocate that Greece should join Bulgaria in attacking Serbia, although he did profess himself able to understand the scruples that such a policy might inspire. Even the German Minister at Athens would not go so far as that. He demanded no more from Greece than neutrality, and threatened that if she attacked Bulgaria he would ask for his passports. While Theotokis and Streit were working away together on behalf of Germany, Venizelos, now back in Athens, was devoting himself to the interests of the Entente with which he felt that the interests of his own country were completely bound up. On August 18th at a Cabinet Council Streit announced that Prince Demidoff, the Russian Minister in Athens, had referred in conversation to the possibility of Greece's sending 150,000 men to fight beside the Serbians on the Danube. Venizelos at once declared that he was ready to place the whole of the Greek forces at the disposal of the Entente in accordance with their invitation. Streit said that it had not been an invitation, but merely a sounding by one of the Entente Ministers. And as a matter of fact Demidoff never suggested that those 150,000 should fight on the Danube.

"Further, he (Streit) objected that before Greece committed herself it was necessary to find out where she would be expected to fight, the conditions under which she would fight, and the compensations she would receive in the event of victory. As a last resort he proposed to adjourn the discussion until the afternoon, but M. Venizelos answered that there was no time to lose: the War would be over in three weeks. Whereupon M. Streit resigned and M. Venizelos offered to the Entente Ministers the adhesion of Greece forthwith."

The above extract is taken from Mr. G. F. Abbott's ludicrously ill-informed and prejudiced book *Greece and the Allies*, and he adds a footnote, which is apparently not

intended to be facetious, that his authority for this glimpse behind the scenes is M. Streit himself.

What Venizelos envisaged was the possibility of the Entente's going to war with Turkey, in which case it would be vital for Greece to be on their side. Let it be remembered that the Turks had already expelled 200,000 Greeks from Asia Minor and Thrace, most of whom were in the uttermost depths of destitution. Others had been driven into the interior with the accompaniment of every horror. The occupation of the Turkish islands, though settled by Treaties, had not yet been accepted by Turkey. There was the dishonourably protracted Italian occupation of Rhodes and the rest of the Dodecanese, and should Italy keep out of the war Greece by coming in might recover those islands as well. Venizelos believed in the certainty of ultimate victory for the Entente. He was well aware that, with the Bulgarian attitude still uncertain, it was hardly feasible for Greece to help Serbia actively, and even less feasible to send any force to France; but in a war with Turkey he saw that Greece could be useful and without danger to herself stand to gain enormously. King Constantine supported this offer to the Entente by Venizelos of Greek aid, and King George telegraphed personally to thank him for his proposal, which he said his Government would consider. But on consideration the British Government replied that it was anxious to avoid war with Turkey and advised Greece to make every possible effort to keep the Turks neutral. In his impressively modest book *Twenty-Five Years* Lord Grey accepts the full responsibility for this refusal of the Greek alliance; but it is clear that a heavier weight of responsibility must rest upon Lord Kitchener, who, obsessed as he always was by fears for the safety of Egypt had insisted on the importance of keeping Turkey out of the war until at any rate the Indian troops were through the Suez Canal. Lord Grey argues that

the postponement of Turkish intervention for a few weeks was necessary; but there has been nothing in the subsequent history of British rule in India to convince even the most credulous that those at the head of Indian affairs had enough imagination to appreciate the trend of Indian opinion. It would surely have been worth while to risk the effect on Moslem feeling in India of making the reception of the German warships a *casus belli* in order to secure the freedom of the Dardanelles for the remainder of that long war which the prescience of Lord Kitchener is reputed to have anticipated. And then, following that old bad precedent which had led to so much confusion and uncertainty in Europe before the war, the British Government went on to suggest to Greece that an understanding might be reached between the General Staffs of the two countries in case action should ultimately have to be taken. The Admiralty instructed Admiral Mark Kerr to make arrangements with the Greek General Staff by which in the event of Turkey's going to war a plan could be worked out to seize Gallipoli with a Greek army and let the British Fleet through to Constantinople. King Constantine at once repudiated any intention of going to war with Turkey, though he professed himself willing to accept the help of the Entente if Turkey declared war on Greece. It was becoming more and more obvious that the King and his Prime Minister were determined to follow different paths, and Venizelos went so far as to offer his resignation. At this time Roumania was trying to form an alliance of neutrals to resist interference from either the Entente or the Central Powers and, at peace themselves, supply provisions and arms to both groups of belligerents. In order to arrange the outstanding differences between Greece and Turkey plenipotentiaries were sent to Bucharest, at the first meeting of which Talaat Bey declared that his country was no longer free to negotiate; and it soon became clear

that not merely was Turkey committed to war on the side of the Central Powers, but also that Bulgaria was merely biding her time to follow Turkey.

This was the moment when Sir Edward Grey, presumably under the fatal influence of the Buxtons, agreed to the idea of reviving the Balkan League of 1912. Serbia and Greece by this plan were to surrender a certain amount of territory to Bulgaria in return for which they were to divide up Albania between them after the war. Roumania was also to make territorial concessions to Bulgaria and when the war was over compensate herself at the expense of Austria with Transylvania. The death of the Hohenzollern King Carol of Roumania in October and the fancied influence of the new Queen, a daughter of the Duke of Edinburgh, was supposed to increase the likelihood of securing Roumanian help. Meanwhile, Austria was offering Italy a large slice of Albania in order to persuade her on second thoughts to honour the Triple Alliance.

On October 31st the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* bombarded Odessa, and Turkey entered the war. At the beginning of November the Entente Ministers in Athens asked the Greeks to go to the help of Serbia, which Venizelos refused to do, unless Roumania would guarantee the neutrality of Bulgaria. There was no sign at present that the Entente was going to prosecute the war against Turkey with any vigour, and it was on Turkey that the bright eyes of Venizelos were always fixed.

Then on January 23rd, 1915, Sir Edward Grey made a more determined attempt to persuade Greece to enter the war, and for the first time mentioned territorial concessions to Greece in Asia Minor. Venizelos did not hesitate now. The dream of his life seemed capable of fulfilment, and although Sir Edward Grey had not asked him to surrender Drama and Cavalla to the Bulgarians he offered to do so. This was galling to the King who regarded himself with

greater pleasure as the saviour of his country from the Bulgarians than as a smiter of the Turks. His Scandinavian and Germanic lineage made him fearful of the Slav. He was above all Constantine the Bulgar Slayer. A street in Athens had been named after him thus. It was inevitable that he would decline to surrender Cavalla, which was so much his very own conquest, and certainly Greek opinion as a whole was infuriated by the suggestion that he should. News of the great Bulgarian loan successfully floated in Germany seemed to indicate immediate danger from Bulgaria. Even Venizelos was shaken and refused another request from the Entente to go to Serbia's help, though a British and a French Division were promised to guard against a Bulgarian attack through Macedonia.

However, when it soon began to look as if Great Britain meant to tackle the problem of forcing the Dardanelles seriously, Venizelos, nervous of failing to participate in the success of such an enterprise, offered three Greek Divisions to assist it. His enthusiasm overcame what some would call the timorousness, others the prudence of King Constantine; but when the Prime Minister came out from the Audience he was met by Colonel Metaxas, Chief of the Greek General Staff, who handed him his resignation as a protest against the idea of joining the Dardanelles expedition. Venizelos, realizing the bad moral effect of such a resignation, which had actually been published in the Press before he received it, called upon the King to summon the Crown Council of State for which the Constitution provided of ex-Premiers. It must have been a dramatic scene that Council of State on March 3rd, at which were present some of the bitterest opponents of Venizelos, and only those like myself who know from direct experience the excesses into which personal hatred of Venizelos could lead his political opponents can imagine and marvel at what must have been the magical fervour of an eloquence that could

persuade such adversaries as Rhallis and Dragoumis to agree with his policy. John Theotokis, a brother of the Greek Minister in Berlin demanded that the views of Colonel Metaxas should be heard, and on March 5th a second Crown Council was held, at which Venizelos agreed to offer no more than one Division instead of three. Even Theotokis was at last convinced; and all thought that Greek neutrality was finally at an end. The King, however, declared that rather than consent he would abdicate, and on the following day Venizelos resigned. He had hardly resigned before the replies arrived from the Entente Powers to his offer of Greek help. Great Britain wished for a more definite proposal after the King's decision, when she would consult with her Allies. France and Russia both demanded that Greece should not limit herself to war against Turkey, but declare war upon Austria and Germany also. The truth was that neither France nor Russia really liked the idea of a Dardanelles expedition. Indeed the French had only accepted it to keep the British from attacking Alexandretta, and thus, as they thought, imperilling the prospect of their Syrian supremacy, while Russia, though anxious for munitions, was even more anxious about the future of Constantinople. Much was naturally made by the opponents of Venizelos of these snubs from the Great Powers of the Entente. When to them was added the failure of the British naval attack on the Dardanelles during March, those who had been persuaded by the great Cretan's eloquence were beginning to say how wise the King had been after all. The King would have been less than human, had he not taken advantage of the diplomacy, tactics, and strategy of the Entente to assume the bearing of a Prometheus; but if he was a Prometheus he was a Prometheus bound, and the German eagle was gnawing at his vitals.

When Venizelos resigned, the Chamber was dissolved and M. Gounaris, one of the bitterest adversaries of Veni-

zelos, was made Prime Minister until a General Election could be held. There are those who found Gounaris fascinating. For me his long lank figure and sponge-coloured beard and soft speech had a repulsion that no snake has had. Of his ability as a party politician there is no doubt, and the wretched man paid the penalty for it when he was dragged from a sick bed to be executed on November 28th, 1922.

Owing to the fact that this election would have to be held under the new register, which would include the inhabitants of the territories won during the Balkan Wars of 1912-13, it did not take place until June 13th; but, even when Venizelos had been returned with a reduced but still large majority, owing to the King's illness the new Chamber did not meet until August 23rd, so that during the critical part of the Dardanelles operations the benevolent neutrality voted by the country was represented by the malevolent neutrality of the Government. Not that there was any open departure from the policy of apparent friendliness to the Entente. One of the first acts of the new Government through Zographos, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, was to send an assurance of this to the Entente Powers.

On April 11th the Ministers of the Entente were empowered to offer Greece in return for co-operation against Turkey territorial acquisitions in the Vilayet of Aidin. As usual the Foreign Ministries in London, Paris, and Petrograd failed to instruct their representatives in Athens properly, so that nobody ever arrived at what exactly this meant. Sir Francis Elliot supposed that it meant Smyrna and a large slice of territory behind; but neither M. Deville nor Prince Demidoff could give any positive assurances on this point. This is not surprising, because by this date the French were undoubtedly beginning to think that they would rather like Smyrna themselves. The secret Treaty of London with Italy was on the verge of being signed, and by that treaty Italy was to be given large

territorial rewards in Asia Minor. It is true that Smyrna was not actually mentioned, but like I with the apple-pie in the alphabet Italy had inked it, and from that moment, just as it darted through Emma with the speed of an arrow that Mr. Knightly must marry nobody except herself, it darted through the French with equal speed that Smyrna must belong to nobody except themselves. This is most important to understand, because the real reason for the Salonica expedition, for the French determination to bring Greece into the war under their auspices, and ultimately for the treachery of both France and Italy during the Greek invasion of Asia Minor in 1922 was that future of Smyrna, which was to be still further obscured at one of the Conferences by Mr. Lloyd George's promise of the city to Italy when the war he was only anxious to get on with should be won. It may be argued that the King, M. Gounaris, and the Greek General Staff were justified in maintaining that Venizelos's vision of a great Micro-Asiatic empire was indeed nothing but an idle dream. But then Venizelos understood better than they the British way of doing things.

The retirement of Venizelos from the helm afforded an opportunity to Prince George of Greece to take a diplomatic cruise round Athens. Prince George, although he hated Venizelos more bitterly than any member of his House, had married Princess Marie Bonaparte. He was a genuine lover of France, and his wife was a great friend of M. Briand. On April 14th another offer was made to come in with the Entente if the integrity of Greece's territory was guaranteed during the war and for a certain period afterwards; but it was stipulated that the Greek Army should confine its operations to European Turkey. This was a not unreasonable condition, certainly as reasonable as the condition by which Italy was presently to enter the war against Austria only. The Greek General Staff made what seemed at the time an exorbitant demand for the Entente to place

450,000 men in the field to avert any danger from Bulgaria. Yet Salonica was to absorb more men than that within a year. Delcassé insisted that Greece should come in unconditionally, and Prince George who was now back in Paris, advocated this course. More arguments followed, with Greece seeking pledges that the Entente refused to give. The truth was at this date the Allied diplomatists were filled with a ridiculous optimism about the entry of Bulgaria into the war on their side, of which there was as much chance as of a blue moon rising in the west. Not that they received any encouragement from Sir Henry Bax-Ironside, the British Minister in Sofia. Nevertheless the imminent entry of Italy into the war on the side of the Entente produced a fresh outburst of diplomatic Couéism which was now concentrated upon believing that Bulgaria would come in like Italy. The Serbians and the Greeks were warned off making any arrangements to help one another against their enemy, and on May 20th Bax-Ironside was authorized by Sir Edward Grey to offer a large piece of Serbian Macedonia to Bulgaria. To be sure, it was not to be taken over until after the war, and only then if the Entente were successful in obtaining Bosnia and Herzegovina for Serbia with an outlet on the Adriatic. Furthermore, the Bulgarian Government was informed that every effort would be made to secure Cavalla for them. There was a brief delay before this offer was actually made, because Petrograd wanted to present Cavalla to the Bulgarians outright without consulting the Greeks and Paris was unwilling to commit French policy like this until the Greek elections were over.

We are refreshed by a breath of common-sense diplomacy at last. It does seem incredible that any statesmen could have been quite so dull as to endanger the return of Venizelos to power on June 13th by a diplomatic *gaffe* like the offer of Cavalla at such a moment. However, French common-sense was overruled, and on May 29th the Ministers of

Great Britain, Russia, and France, now reinforced by the Italian Minister, communicated in writing the offer of the Entente to Radislavoff, the Bulgarian premier. In spite of this, when the Greek Elections were held, 184 seats out of 310 were won by the Liberals. After that *bêtise* of a fortnight ago it was not to be expected the Liberals would fare well in Thrace and Macedonia, where indeed they only won 4 seats out of 73. In Crete and the Islands, however, they swept the polls, and with a clear majority of 58 over any possible parliamentary combination against him Venizelos, who had had to contend even with German gold, might feel satisfied that the country endorsed his foreign policy. In spite of the victory his opponents took advantage of the King's serious illness to secure a delay in the formation of a government. The Chamber was not summoned, and for well over two months the Gounarist Cabinet remained in office. Indeed when I arrived in Athens it was still in office, Venizelos and his party not taking up the reins of government until August 23rd.

Meanwhile, the judiciously pessimistic Bax-Ironside had been recalled from Sofia, and on August 3rd the new British Minister, Mr. O'Beirne, was instructed to make a formal offer to the Bulgarian Government of Cavalla and a slice of territory behind it together with Serbian Macedonia. Bulgaria was informed at the same time that pressure would be brought to bear upon Greece and Serbia to surrender these territories, by denying them compensation elsewhere if they refused. On August 6th the Tsar of Russia, the King of England, the King of Italy, and the President of the French Republic, each sent a personal appeal to Serbia to surrender Macedonia to Bulgaria for the common good; but they sent no personal appeal to King Constantine. That night the Suvla landing failed. On August 20th Mr. O'Beirne telegraphed gloomily from Sofia to Sir Edward Grey that the entry of Bulgaria

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

into the war on the side of the Entente was more remote than ever; but of course it had never been less remote than Aldebaran from the Earth. Sir Valentine Chirol, who had been tinkering about with diplomacy in Sofia, moved on to tinker with equal ineffectiveness in Bucharest. German propaganda helped by Allied diplomacy was winning new adherents every day. King Constantine's convalescence made no advance. The Icon of Our Lady of Tenos which had been brought from its island to save him from death had left his slow recovery to the exigencies of politics. The delay in giving Venizelos the helm to which the people of Greece had called him seemed likely to wreck the ship of State among the shallows of party strife.

CHAPTER III

POINTS OF VIEW

IT must not be supposed that when I first landed in Phaleron from the *Imogen* I could have written a single word of that last chapter. Beyond sharing the widely spread belief that King Constantine was devoted to the interests of Germany in defiance of the general will of the country he ruled I knew really nothing. So, when within twenty-four hours of my arrival Admiral Mark Kerr took the trouble to put before me the position of the King in regard to the Entente, I was soon as much governed by the sway of purest monarchy as himself.

It was always said that the head of the British Naval Mission had a weakness for kings, and stories were told of him in this connexion which competed even with the stories that used to be told of Sir Herbert Warren, the late President of Magdalen. Yet I do not fancy that Admiral Kerr's devoted and unfaltering loyalty to King Constantine was inspired so much by the Hellenic Crown upon his high-domed head as by the Admiral's association of his own personality with that of Lord Nelson. I would hazard a guess that his championship of the Glücksburgs in Greece was linked in his mind with Nelson's championship of the Bourbons in Naples. Admiral Kerr was genuinely convinced that King Constantine was a much maligned and greatly wronged man. No consideration for his own career ever allowed him to abate in the slightest degree his advocacy of the King's case. It may be pointed out that although after leaving Greece he was given the command

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

of the Adriatic Squadron and later became Deputy-Chief of the Air Staff, his last British honour is the Companionship of the Bath given to him in 1913. I have never heard his seamanship criticized, so that political indiscretion must presumably be the reason for this conspicuous neglect to recognize his services. Let one who cannot agree with his interpretation of the Greek muddle pay a tribute of respect to a very chivalrous gentleman whose loyalty to an unfortunate Royal family is worthy of being mentioned beside the loyalty of those who sacrificed all they possessed for the House of Stuart.

Admiral Kerr, who had made up his mind that I could become a useful pleader of the King's point of view, suggested that he should come round to the Hotel d'Angleterre and explain the situation which was being so completely mishandled.

By the time he had finished with his exposition of our diplomatic behaviour, which lasted for the better part of a morning while I lay on my bed and he walked up and down that little room on the fifth floor of the hotel, I was feeling as indignant as he was about the injustice done. No doubt I was flattered by the apparent importance that a man in his position attached to my potential influence; but it would be doing the Admiral's eloquence an injustice to suggest that I was converted merely by my own vanity. It was his evident sincerity and really passionate belief in the unfair treatment of the King that made his arguments so persuasive. The first point with which he impressed on me the bad treatment of King Constantine was that, six weeks after Venizelos had resigned, the much abused Gounarist Cabinet with the full approval of the King and the General Staff had authorized Zographos, the Foreign Minister, to offer to the Entente the alliance of Greece, and that the Entente had not condescended even to acknowledge the offer. This was a different tale

from any I had been hearing about King Constantine's attitude.

"I suppose they were so much engaged at that time in bribing Italy to come in that they could not afford to pay any attention to Greece?" I suggested.

Admiral Kerr agreed that this was one reason, but he added that the Tsar had warned King Constantine personally that the Russians would oppose an alliance with Greece and in any case forbid a single Greek soldier to set foot in Constantinople.

"And yet," he declared indignantly, "the diplomats here treat the King as an avowed enemy and neglect him entirely for Venizelos, who as a matter of fact, has *not* the support of the Greek people. I tell you, Mackenzie, the King is entirely with us. Why, he put into my hands the plans of the Greek General Staff for forcing the Dardanelles and told me I might send them on to the proper quarter, which I did."

"And what was the result?"

"They were never even acknowledged."

It seemed incredible; but Admiral Kerr spoke with such bitterness that it was impossible not to believe his story.

"These things ought to be known," I exclaimed.

"That is why I am telling them to you. You have got to make them known. What you ought to do," he continued, "is to take on the Entente propaganda here. A counterpoise to Baron Schenck is badly required. At present the Germans are having it all their own way, though for that the Entente diplomacy deserves more credit than their ability. The German propaganda thrives on our mistakes. The latest thing is that the Entente has actually offered Cavalla to the Bulgarians without consulting Greece. And then we're surprised that the German propaganda makes headway."

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

I was thinking a little regretfully that it would be a much more amusing job to take on contre-espionage than newspaper propaganda, though I had to admit to myself that my pen could be used more practically than in making lists of suspected spies, the evidence for whose nefariousness was seldom convincing. I determined to put the matter before Sir Francis Elliot. If he expressed a desire for me to remain in Athens and undertake propaganda, I would do my best. There was no possibility now of any advance in Gallipoli until next Spring. A job in Athens would keep me active, whereas if I got into the hands of the military doctors I might find myself out of the war altogether. Next Spring I should be feeling fit for anything, and I was sure that Sir Ian Hamilton would take me back on his Staff for whatever adventures 1916 held in store. Should Sir Francis not think my services of value to propaganda, I could with a clear conscience try to secure the contre-espionage job.

"Unfortunately," Admiral Kerr was saying, "I'm going home for three months' leave. I've been rather ill."

This was a blow. My fancy had leapt ahead to the picture of myself in control of the propaganda, and a friend at Court like the Admiral would have been invaluable.

"In fact, I'm off in about a week," he went on. "I should have liked to take you round to see the King before I went; but the Legation people would probably object."

"Anyway," I put in, "I've no proper clothes for an audience."

Although the Admiral was on the verge of leaving Athens, he found time to give me several drives in his car. It was with him I first drove to Eleusis and stood by the water's edge, gazing across the bay to the mountains of Salamis. I remember that it was late afternoon and that I clambered up to stand upon the Sacred Way whose paving-stones are still visible as far as the plateau on which rose the Great Temple of the Mysteries, and I remember the

POINTS OF VIEW

thrill with which I imagined the torchlit procession that on the fifth day of the Greater Eleusinia moved solemnly along this Sacred Way, almost at this very time of the year. From where I was standing I could see a small green valley in which large isolated pines glowed intensely green in the golden light of the westering sun. I cannot recall that any other trees have ever seemed so supremely expressive of the life of their country. The oaks of Epping, the almonds of Sicily, the stone-pines of the Borghese Gardens in Rome, poplars beside a straight white road of France, birches leaning among the mossy boulders of a highland glen, all these speak of a country's heart; but they have never spoken for me with such sublime interpretation as those full-breasted maritime-pines in the Vale of Daphne spoke that afternoon. 'They *are* Greece,' I was saying over and over again to myself, and had I been a Giorgione I could have proved it by the way I would have painted them. I was aware of that eternal life in nature which has led men into seeking to express it by shapes of tutelary nymphs, and indeed a vision of Persephone herself would not have surprised me . . . but these moments outside time as we count it are ill to write of, for they remain incommunicable, since they demand for comprehension that the whole of a reader's experience should crystallize into one flashing instant of revelation of the same brightness as the writer's original experience which he is trying to reconjure with mere words. But those pines burning green in the clarity of that golden air, how can they burn upon the printed page? And let it be remembered that when I saw them I was standing on the stones of that Sacred Way which was only trodden by those to whom had been revealed the secret of immortal life.

On another occasion we drove down to Phaleron to see some skeletons whose burial-place had been uncovered by building operations. By the iron collars round their necks,

not yet even rusted away, they had been slaves in the flesh. Had these poor helots known the secret of immortal life? Yet it seemed almost indecent to be taking all this trouble to look at and wonder about the skeletons of more than two thousand years ago when there were so many dead at Gallipoli to see and wonder about.

But the drive I remember best was when the two daughters of Colonel Manos, the Master of the Horse, were with us. With one of them Admiral Kerr was exchanging light chaff all the way; with the other I was trying somewhat unsuccessfully to maintain the inevitableness of an ultimate victory for the Entente. They were living with their mother in a small flat, and we were invited back to tea. For some reason the car did not pull up outside their house, so we had to walk for a hundred yards or so. Probably the road was in a half-made state. Anyway, the Admiral walked on with 'Roxie,' and my argument continued with her sister. Suddenly she stopped in the glittering dust and, raising her arm above her head, she spoke with such passion against the proposal of the Entente to cede Cavalla to Bulgaria that I forgot she was a mortal girl not yet twenty and could have fancied I was listening to Pallas Athene herself pleading before Zeus the cause of her beloved Greeks. She was tall. Her complexion was the burnt rose of an old vase. Her profile was fit profile for a goddess, and a less impressionable person than myself might have imagined that she was speaking with the inspiration of divinity. While she stood there, that glorious young woman, delivering that glorious tirade against the oppressors of her country, I was thinking what a heroine of romance she would make. And perhaps even while she was declaiming against the iniquitous hypocrisy of great nations I began to weave a romance round her; but if I did it could not have been as rich a romance as that which reality wove round her, for this was the beautiful girl whom King

POINTS OF VIEW

Alexander married and who is now Her Highness the Princess Aspasia of Greece.

A minute or two after this we were all having tea in a small room crowded with furniture, and I was wondering how the dark and gentle Madame Manos with her sad face and quiet voice came to be the mother of this lovely and radiant fanatic.

I went away from that flat, convinced that a monstrous injustice was being perpetrated against Greece, that King Constantine was being slandered, and that Venizelos himself was nothing but at the best a second Themistocles. And then within a couple of hours the enthusiasm of a young man gave to the great Cretan the stature of a Pericles.

I was sitting by myself outside a café and, as I watched the people pass with leisurely footsteps in the warm twilight, I was remembering how Aspasia Manos had stood in that glittering dusty half-made street beneath the full blue velvet sky of afternoon calling vengeance down upon the enemies of her country. A young man with pale face, fair wavy hair, and light blue burning prominent eyes leaned across from the next table and raising his hat excused himself in perfect English for asking if I were a British officer from the Dardanelles. No doubt it was my duty to be instantly upon my guard and turn my back on a potential spy; but I had not a moment's hesitation in answering the young man's question simply and truthfully.

"Will you be through soon?" he asked. "Pardon me, sir, if I appear to intrude myself; but we are all praying in Greece that the Straits will be forced and that Constantinople will quickly fall."

No doubt it was my duty instantly to assure the young man that we should be in Constantinople probably by Michaelmas, and certainly by Hallowe'en; but there was in his bearing so much anxious sincerity that I had no heart to dismiss him with a cold lie.

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

"Not before next Spring, I fear," was my unpardonably indiscreet rejoinder.

He struck the small metal table before him with his clenched fist.

"This is terrible news to hear," he murmured, shaking his head. "But I am sure that we shall soon march with you. Venizelos will lead the country forward."

"You believe in Venizelos?"

He stared at me in astonishment.

"You are a British officer and you ask me that? Why, he is the greatest man Greece has known since the days of Marathon and Salamis."

Without mentioning names I told the young man of what I had been hearing two hours ago.

"But excuse me, sir," he said gravely, "such a person must be mad. The Palace clique do not represent the country. They must pretend to be so patriotic, but it is for the King they are thinking, not for Greece. It is for them a snobbism to speak like this. They are afraid of Venizelos because they think he will sweep away all this rottenness of Athens. For them the Μεγάλη 'Ιδέα—the Great Idea—is a nothing. They are so happy in their little toy court, and they do not want to see a greater Greece in which they will be lost. They are jealous of the island Greeks. They understand that the unredeemed Greeks of Asia Minor are bigger than they are. What is Cavalla if we may win Smyrna and perhaps even Η ΠΙΟΛΗ? We always call Constantinople THE CITY. And Venizelos knows that with the help of Great Britain, he can make a great Greece, because for Great Britain a great Greece will always be good. The German dream is to make Asia Minor another India, and it is because Constantine knows this he will not help to keep it from Germany."

For an hour that young enthusiast talked with a fervour that equalled the fervour of Aspasia Manos. And as he

POINTS OF VIEW

talked I saw Venizelos turn to the semblance of one of his own Cretan mountains and tower above the Athenian street, where the petty throng of unimaginative humanity came to seem as idle as the spume round the base of a cliff. He might even be stable enough to survive the shocks of an imbecile diplomacy, for whether that lovely rose-burnt girl were right or whether this pale young man with the flaming light-blue prominent eyes, nothing could justify the diplomatic handling of the situation in Greece by London, Paris, and Petrograd. Do I seem to be writing shrilly in calling it imbecile? About a year later when that imbecile diplomacy had turned the situation in Greece to a tragic farce, and when I was beginning to wonder if we were justified in spurring on the Venizelists to take matters into their own hands I asked Sir Francis Elliot to send a personal appeal to Sir Arthur Nicolson* and ascertain definitely what our policy was in Greece. I pointed out that, as affairs were marching in Athens, it might not be long before grave events took place.

"Neither you nor I, sir, in our respective positions would care to think that we had done anything to encourage the Venizelists to believe that Great Britain would regard favourably more aggressive methods on their side, unless Great Britain is prepared to support them. Affairs in Athens have reached such a pitch that it will soon be impossible to prevent something like a revolution. Now do we want that revolution? Does the British Government any longer attach any real importance to Greek intervention? Has the British Government any conception of what it wants to make out of the Levant when the war is over? Is a strong Greece desired under British influence? Or a strong Greece under French influence feared? What has really been promised to Italy in the Levant? And what is the feeling about Russia? What in a word is our policy

* The late Lord Carnock.

out here? It is only right that you should know, and you will then be in a position to instruct me. You are well aware how desperately anxious I am personally that we should throw our whole weight behind Venizelos and Venizelism. At the same time it is hardly fair to let my private enthusiasm create an entirely wrong impression of the official British attitude. I would far rather do everything in my power to stop matters going any further and discourage any kind of optimism among the supporters of Venizelos, however feeble I might consider our policy, than let them down. So don't you think, sir, that a personal telegram from you might extract from the Foreign Office what our policy in Greece really is."

Sir Francis pondered this appeal for a minute or two and then sent off in a cipher which is only used for exceptionally important communications a request that Sir Arthur Nicolson should let him know what our policy was in Greece, explaining the circumstances which led him to ask such a question at the moment. Sir Arthur Nicolson replied that he hoped within a few days to let Sir Francis Elliot know what our policy in Greece was. The Permanent Under-Secretary was too sanguine, for this is a paraphrase of the answer which Sir Edward Grey finally sent Sir Francis Elliot after two years of war.

"We have no policy in Greece except when possible to exercise a moderating influence on the French."

Any reader who has bothered even to skim the abstract I have given in the preceding chapter of a year's diplomacy may not be surprised to learn that some twelve months later this should be the answer that a Minister in charge of an ineffably complicated and difficult situation received from his Chief. Nevertheless that telegram was a shock when it came. There is no doubt that the word 'policy' made Sir Edward Grey wince. He must have felt that he was being asked what his little game was. It was the kind

of question one could have asked Mr. Lloyd George. He would have beamed at it. To be sure, we might have been no wiser after his reply; but he would not have administered by implication that chill Wykehamist rebuke. To me it will always be a mournful reflection that, during the first two years of the war when Mr. Lloyd George's impressionable and often genuinely imaginative cleverness and opportunism would have served the country well, it was served less usefully by an English gentleman, but that at the very moment of the war when the services of an English gentleman were badly required we were given the services of Mr. Lloyd George. At the Rome Conference in 1917 Sir Francis Elliot was asked by Mr. Lloyd George to give him an outline of the situation in Greece as he saw it. Sir Francis had hardly begun when Mr. Lloyd George's eyes began to wander to the window and presently he called Sir Francis's attention to a street musician whose performance evidently appealed to him more than an exposition of affairs in Greece. At that moment Lord Milner approached Sir Francis from behind and advised him in a low voice to say whatever he had to say about Greece to himself later on.

Lord Balfour was as much afraid of the word policy as his predecessor. In 1917 I wrote some observations on French policy in the Levant, by which Sir Francis Elliot was sufficiently impressed to send them to Lord Balfour with a note to say by whom they had been written and to endorse them, with a few qualifications of his own, as fairly representing what were the probable facts. Lord Balfour on receiving this communication observed to one of his assistants that he did not want to hear any nonsense about policies in the existence of which he did not believe, and that in any case he wanted to hear from Athens what Elliot himself thought and not what anybody else thought.

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

There is something to be said for this distrust of policies. As I write these words Mr. Baldwin is obtaining a great deal of support and sympathy, apparently because he has not the slightest idea what he wants to do and an evident disbelief in his own ability to carry out anything he might want to do. A lack of policy is what the English call 'muddling through somehow,' and they are proud of this ability to muddle through. Still, the process for those who have to do the active muddling is an exasperating one and the treatment of Greece during the Great War for Civilization was one of the most disreputable examples of muddling through in our history. Indeed, it was such an embrangled muddle in Athens that I am beginning to despair of giving these memories of it form or even coherence. I feel inclined like Mr. Lloyd George in Rome to spend my time looking idly out of the window at the ebb and flow of humanity in that distressful country.

Admiral Kerr's condemnation of Entente diplomacy was expressed even more strongly by 'Tommy' Cuninghame,* our Military Attaché in Athens. Cuninghame was the pragmatist Lowland laird whose portrait might look down from the walls of an old Ayrshire house. Bozzy might have turned the post-chaise aside to give Dr. Johnson an opportunity of meeting him. As likely as not he and Dr. Johnson would have mixed well for a time, because Cuninghame would probably have heard what Dr. Johnson was saying and would not have seemed so contemptuous of other people's opinions by ignoring them on account of his deafness. Bozzy would have had enough tact not to make the visit too long, and when the post-chaise was jolting northward again Dr. Johnson would perhaps have delivered an orotund laudation of their late host's good sense.

I had already met Cuninghame on the Peninsula which

* Col. Sir Thomas Montgomery-Cuninghame, Bt., D.S.O.

he had visited from Athens and, by the way he was now talking of the Dardanelles Expedition, without having been impressed by anything except the incompetence of its direction. He was living with his wife at the Hotel d'Angleterre where their large private sitting-room on the first floor became a salon of discontent with the way things were being managed in Greece. Lady Cuninghame was a tall woman whose dark beauty seemed out of place with her fondness for fox-hunting. Unable to hunt out here, she became absorbed in politics and believed that she was able to undo a little of the harm that the attitude of the Legation toward the King, the Court, and the General Staff was doing. Whether Admiral Kerr had bequeathed my cherishing to Cuninghame before he went home I do not know; but certainly the Military Attaché took a great deal of trouble from the first to turn me into a devoted supporter of the King's point of view. Argument with Tommy Cuninghame was a difficult business because he heard little of what was said to him and of what he did hear he usually barked a scornful contradiction. Centuries of struggles with the English, years of dusty theology from which, though he was not himself troubled by any theological problems, the habit of disputation had remained, a readiness to feel himself affronted, which seemed an inheritance from the affronts offered to Scotsmen who came south with James VI, had combined to make a man of long and illustrious lineage, with much more brain than the average Rifleman, present himself to the world as a querulous, obstinate, and disappointed soldier. It is a commonplace of diplomatic observation that all military attachés are inclined to meddle with what does not concern their duties, and as long as military attachés are allowed to have their own cipher and communicate directly with the War Office they will be subject to this temptation. Cuninghame had made up his mind that King Constantine's attitude toward

the Allies had been deliberately misunderstood in order to salve that French vanity which had been wounded by the speech at Potsdam. That was why the Royal attitude was prejudged and the Royal intentions were presumed. His contempt for the French would lead him even so far as to declaring sometimes that we were on the wrong side in this war. Not that he cared a great deal for Germany, but the thought of being at war with Austria was a real torment to his spirit. This dislike of being at war with Austria was widely felt in England, and it was particularly noticeable among naval officers. Many a one have I heard deplore the fact that the Austrians were our enemies. One of my most vivid memories of August, 1914, is of a sunny morning in the garden of the Vice-Provost at Eton. Desmond MacCarthy and his wife had just driven up from the station for lunch, and some small silver was wanted to pay the cabman. In the middle of the search Mrs. Warre-Cornish bore down on me across the lawn and said in her most sublimely inconsequent tone :

"*We* have declared war upon Austria. Sixpence can always be found. But *we* have declared war upon Austria ?"

However, stories about Mrs. Cornish should really not be told except to those who knew her. She is incommunicable.

Erskine was the member of the Legation to whom Cuninghame attributed most of the blame for neglecting and misprising the King. Erskine and I once agreed that probably the most logical way to express in the contemporary world one's Jacobite prejudices was to turn republican. It was really a point of view anticipated by the last Earl Marischal. Not that there was any active passion for republicanism in Erskine. He would have thought the President of the Greek Republic as ridiculous as he thought the King. But any reverence for Kingship with Divine

POINTS OF VIEW

Right had probably died in his family when that standard on the Braes of Mar had fluttered in vain. Cuninghame on the other hand like Mark Kerr genuinely believed a king was by the quality of his kingship endowed with superior discernment. Both of them acknowledged a semi-mystical quality in kingship, and neither of them seemed able to recognize that kings were nowadays only kings by the will of the majority. Consequently when King Constantine affirmed his goodwill toward the Entente the Chief of the British Naval Mission and the British Military Attaché believed him. They would have done him a greater service if, instead of rejecting as ridiculous any evidence to the contrary that was brought before them, they had sifted the evidence without prejudice. I do not doubt that, before the farce in Greece was played to its tragic end, we were all of us guilty of prejudicing our judgment; but looking back on that time after a lapse of years and with as thorough knowledge as anybody at first hand of what actually did happen I can only recognize that the bad example was set by the party that came to be known as Royalist.

Devoted adherents of King Constantine like Cuninghame were often most indiscreet in the way they criticized the British Legation. This encouraged the King to suppose that, if he could get rid of the allied diplomats whom he thought unsympathetic to his point of view, he would be able to justify his attitude. The muddle was being made by those responsible for allied diplomacy at the fountain head. The muddle was being made because the positive and mutually incompatible ambitions of Russia, France, and Italy were being handled by the British Foreign Office in a spirit of compromise which in time of war is apt to prolong the catastrophe itself, and exacerbate its incidents. The muddle in Athens was linked up with the muddle at Constantinople, with the muddle at Sofia, with the muddle

at Bucharest, with the muddle at Gallipoli, and it was presently to become more inextricably confused than ever by that muddle of muddles at Salonica. Cuninghame believed that the King could be cajoled. Erskine did not. But if every diplomat in Athens had agreed upon a right policy, and if that policy had been enthusiastically endorsed in Greece by a united nation, there would have been the same muddle, because there were three of the four major allies with irreconcilable ambitions of their own, and one ally with apparently no ambition at all except a mild desire to win the war in a gentlemanly way. It was impossible for the average Greek to imagine that opinions like those of Cuninghame could have been expressed unless he had behind him a strong political party at home. Continental nations do not understand that the country is managed by permanent officials who will remain in power whatever the government. My pen runs ahead. In August, 1915, I had as many delusions about British policy as the Greeks themselves. It seemed clear from what Cuninghame and Kerr told me that grave mistakes had been made. I had already learnt at Gallipoli the cost of such mistakes, but I still believed that there were reasons for those apparent blunders. I still believed that there were directing minds at the Foreign Office with boundlessly far-sighted ideas about the future of Europe. When I set off to stay with Sir Francis Elliot at Cephissia I was determined to suggest myself as a suitable person to conduct a propaganda that would in its humble way contribute to the fulfilment of those far-sighted aims.

At dinner that night I said I had been astonished to hear how much King Constantine's attitude had been misjudged, and I can still see the expression on the face of Rendel who was also staying with Sir Francis, and I can still recall the tone of his voice as he looked quickly up from his plate across the table and advised me to hear the other side before

POINTS OF VIEW

I jumped to conclusions. And after dinner Rendel gave me a little lecture on the diplomatic history of Athens for the last year, which made me realize that the value of anything that Kerr or Cuninghame had told me depended on the King's truthfulness, or perhaps it might be fairer to say the extent to which he might be able to deceive himself and be deceived by others. In spite of Rendel's lecture I was still prejudiced on the King's behalf, and it was with an idea of being fair to him that I suggested to Sir Francis Elliot the advantage of presenting the Greek case in the British newspapers as well as the British case in the Greek newspapers, because a nation as susceptible as the Greeks were to newspaper politics was likely to respond to a well-informed and just appreciation of their point of view. Sir Francis agreed that the comments of the British Press on the Greek situation were usually wild or stupid. This was not the fault of the Press correspondents in Athens who with one or two exceptions were extraordinarily anxious to be helpful, even at the expense of their instincts as correspondents. The Press censorship at home, however, made it impossible to ensure that the British public would be given a reasonably correct account of anything anywhere.

The next morning Sir Francis and Rendel went off to their day's work at the Legation, and I was left to enjoy the comparative coolness of the pine-scented peace of Cephissia. Unfortunately my state of health made this impossible, and I had to spend a furtive and embarrassed day trying to pretend I was unaware of the Niagara which roared at intervals through the coolness and silence of the shaded house. By evening I was a nervous wreck. The next morning I went back to Athens with Sir Francis to consult Dr. Aravantinos, who told me that I was too ill to be at large and must make up my mind to go into a clinic at once and live for a while on boiled rice. He knew of a most

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

suitable establishment and would make arrangements for me to go in the following morning.

Somewhere round about half-past six that evening I was taken to a famous café at the end of the University Boulevard, the name of which eludes my memory. Here faced by the prospect of nothing but boiled rice for days to come I was presented by the waiter with a card on which some thirty different kinds of ices were listed. The temptation was atrocious. My soul responds to a mere vanilla ice smeared out into the thick glass of an Italian ice-cream vendor ; but here was an opportunity to sample ices which were to the ordinary vanilla as Hyperion to a satyr. Although I knew nothing could be worse for my complaint than even a moderate indulgence in ices, greed and curiosity were too much for me. I really did feel that life was less important than sampling these ices to discover which were the most delicious. Some of the fervour which has given martyrs to science was mine. I understood and sympathized with the impulse that drives a man to explore the North Pole. I comprehended at last the passionate recklessness of Bluebeard's Fatima. Even without dysentery and cystitis it would have been impossible for any man to sample every ice on that list, and I do not remember that ever in my life I was so anxious to make a right choice. Paris faced by the problem of awarding an apple to the most beautiful of three goddesses was in no predicament at all compared with mine. I looked at the waiter. Could I rely on his taste to direct me aright, so that whatever pain I might suffer on the morrow would not be embittered by the thought that for all I was suffering I had chosen the wrong ices ? And while I was trying to decide with what varieties I should make myself that amount more ill than I was already I found myself being introduced to the wives of various members of the British Naval Mission, whose habit it was to meet here at dusk. I had not been long enough

POINTS OF VIEW

away from Gallipoli to be unsusceptible to the charm of hearing attractive young Englishwomen talking together in a foreign land, their familiar accents sounding the more throatily sweet in such a setting. To right the marble buildings along the wide boulevard glimmered in the warm Athenian dusk. To left the trees in the garden of the King's Palace were merging beneath a luminous sky that was already lightly sprayed with early stars. Close at hand resounded the dark-eyed laughter and shrill southern chatter of the café, and on the wide pavement before its orange-lighted windows the faces of the customers were nodding to one another round the crowded tables like violas in a bough-pot. And then amid this setting, which would have enchanted with its atmosphere of gaiety and leisure the least impressionable of onlookers, but which to one who for weeks had been wondering if such scenes still existed anywhere on this planet was as dazzling and beguiling as a jewelled cavern of the Arabian Nights, to be told by a charming young Englishwoman with the roses of England in her cheeks that one had met her before, and on asking where and when to be reminded of two delightful little girls with whom one had wandered along the cliffs at Hunstanton twelve years earlier, that was to produce the very person who should be able to advise one which ices to choose. This was Rachel Winter, whose husband Alec* was the Admiral's Secretary. Presently he joined the party and I heard another point of view about the Greek situation. I also heard which were the best six ices on the list and of those six I ate four. Then, thinking of that boiled rice before me and deciding that I might as well make the most of what life remained to me, I wound up my last night of freedom with a mayonnaise of crayfish at dinner.

I did not suggest to Dr. Aravantinos, when he felt my

* Wing-Commander A. Winter, O.B.E., R.A.F.

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

pulse in his consulting room the next morning, a possible explanation for its being even slower than yesterday ; but when he shook his benign head and told me that it was high time I was being properly looked after in a clinic I agreed with him cordially.

CHAPTER IV

FRESH FIGS

An Interlude

THE clinic to which Dr. Aravantinos and I drove off on the morning of the twelfth of August was appropriately situated in Asclepius Street. The proprietor like all Mediterranean doctors with nursing-homes of their own had as much the air of a hotel manager as of a doctor, and indeed with notable exceptions like Dr. Aravantinos most Mediterranean doctors convey to their patients that their purses are being felt at the same time as their pulses. English doctors manage to avoid giving this impression. On behalf of Mediterranean doctors it must be allowed that when they do send in their bills they expect their patients to tell them that they have charged twice as much as they ought; but I never heard of anybody's venturing to tell an English family doctor that his bills were exorbitant.

The threshold of a nursing-home always casts a chill upon the spirit, and I left behind me with regret the noise of the sunny street. The interior of the clinic was white and almost ostentatiously clean, permeated too by the authentic odour of disinfectants which should encourage the patient to suppose that he cannot remain ill for long in such a hygienic atmosphere. The windows of my room looked out upon a long narrow street, which sloped gradually downhill toward the middle of the city; but in this silence and whiteness I was glad to hear from below the shouts of children

playing and the cries of street vendors. There was no furniture except a white bed, a white cupboard, a white table, two white chairs, and on the floor an expanse of well waxed linoleum.

Among the advantages of the clinic he had chosen for my cure Dr. Aravantinos had told me that the nurse who would look after me could speak Italian well, she being a native of Corfu. After I had undressed and got into bed this Corfiote nurse arrived and carried off all my clothes. Whether the notion was to prevent my rebelling against the diet of boiled rice and escaping back to a world of ices, or whether it was that the clothes were considered unhygienic I do not know, but when they were carried off like this it was soon revealed on my asking for something from one of the pockets that my nurse knew as much of Italian as I knew of Icelandic. She was a pasty-faced heavily built woman with a great deal of dingy orange hair, and she did not seem at all ashamed of her complete failure as an Italian speaker. I do not suppose her conversation would have been entertaining, even if I had had the benefit of it; but the first hour or two in a nursing-home is always a particularly lonely experience, and I should have been glad to talk to anybody. I felt sorry for myself at being dragged away so quickly from the charm of Athens and immured in this white room, with the prospect in an hour or so of having to endure one of those extremely unpleasant operations which cystitis sometimes necessitates. The only book which I had to read for the moment was a quarto edition of Lucian. Feeling too languid to wrestle with a lexicon and a little resentful that my knowledge of ancient Greek had been no kind of help toward conversation with the doughy-cheeked nurse, I leant back on my pillows and began to whistle to myself.

A minute or two later the nurse put her head round the door of my room.

“Μή σφυρίζετε (mē sphyrizete),” she said.

Evidently that meant ‘do not whistle.’ I tried to link up with classical Greek the word she had used, and decided at first it had something to do with σφαῖρα (a ball), connecting it with the pea one sees leaping about in the hole of a tin whistle, but in turning over the pages of the lexicon I came upon σφύζω. Syrx! The Arcadian nymph who was fleeing from Pan was changed into the reed out of which he fashioned pipes to play upon his lost love for evermore. And then I suddenly comprehended that I had heard the old negative imperative.

I cannot hope to convey the extraordinary pleasure it gave me to hear such a classical exclamation. It had been disappointing to find that in modern Greek the other negatives had been debased out of recognition, and it was absurdly gratifying to find that through all the centuries the old negative imperative had remained the same as when the *Iliad* was new. In a flash I was far from the sanitary whiteness of the clinic, far from the thickset pie-faced Corfiote nurse, far from the hoarse cries of the fruit-vendors in the sun-tormented street below, far away in 1892 and the classroom of Mr. MacDougall at St. Paul’s Preparatory School. Those were the days when to teach a lot of inky little boys assistant-masters were expected to dress with more care than nowadays people would dress for a garden party at Buckingham Palace. Mr. MacDougall’s frock coat always seemed to us the extreme of dandified elegance, and Mr. MacDougall’s high silk hat had such an elegant gloss that I believe we were shamed into smoothing down our own disordered hair to be worthy of its sleekness. I was remembering when Mr. MacDougall, who with his handsome florid clean-shaven face and slightly mincing manner, delighted to play Beau Brummell in his own class-room, was driven into shouting as vulgarly as any ordinary assistant-schoolmaster by exasperation at the failure of most of his

class to show the least inclination to grasp when to use μή and when to use οὔ.

That command not to whistle unwound the whole panorama of Greek lessons. I was poring again over Rutherford's Greek Grammar so unsuitably bound in that smooth pale blue cloth which cried out for the spidery decorations of a schoolboy's pen. Here in the heart of Attica itself I was wrestling again in memory with that perverse Attic dialect. I had always been a devout champion of Athens against Sparta. I was a hoplite at Syracuse; I would have shown no mercy to any island untrue to the Delian Confederacy; I even grudged Leonidas the glory of Thermopylæ. But the Attic dialect did strain one's loyalty. The Athenians built the Parthenon; but it must count against them that they had to change a word like ναός for a temple and decline it quite eccentrically as νεώς. They were mad on νεώς, and one asks if the maritime collapse was not hastened by expecting their Ionian friends to use such a genitive for ναῦς a ship. One can imagine an island like Mytilene withdrawing from the Confederacy of Delos merely because it was expected to employ such a provocative genitive.

Little did I guess at this date how much of the Greek history I had learnt at school would with myself as one of the protagonists be repeated nearly two thousand years later.

And after Rutherford's light blue Grammar I was seeing in memory Arnold's Greek Prose bound in a dull shade of green bice. This was surely one of the least inspiring textbooks ever written, comparable in its dreariness and occasional pedagogic facetiousness only to Arnold's Latin Prose, which was bound in a faded magenta. In almost the first exercise there were some sentences about a crocodile bringing forth its young from eggs. What less likely topic would a beginner in any language wish to discuss than the

generative process of a crocodile? Then that quarto of Lucian was reviving another memory of Greek. It was 1894 now, and I was in Brittany with a party of small boys who under the tutelage of Mr. Spencer and Mr. Sankey, two popular masters from St. Paul's Preparatory School were confronting the problems of their future careers.

Williamson? Williamson had been cramming for his *Britannia* examination. A masterful youth, Williamson, with rumbled wavy hair and as much self-possession as one of Marryat's heroes. Where was Williamson now? A Post-Captain?

And Tull? Where was bullet-head Tull now? Tull and I had not been sympathetic. It had been Tull who revealed one of the dreadful skeletons that exist in every school-boy's domestic cupboard. It had been Tull who revealed that I was still subject to the sway of a governess. How Tull obtained possession of that secret I did not remember. Perhaps he was invited to some children's party in Kensington, an alien from the other side of the Park perhaps, who secure as a Campbell by Loch Awe, had been immune from the vengeance of those outraged Kensington boys, the tale of whose governesses and kiddy sisters he would have carried back for the sneers of Bayswater. I could hear again the coldly malicious innocence of Tull's voice as, amid the green shadows of that Brittany garden on the cliff's edge by the sandy Loire estuary, he asked:

"Your governess's name is Stanwell, isn't it?"

And I could feel the warmth of a dead blush as some young wit who overheard him exclaimed:

"Stankwell? What a name!"

And Van Someren? A round, ruddy-faced, plump and cheerful boy in a sailor suit, in his manner some of the Dutch homeliness that was in his name.

And Head? He too in a sailor suit with a great deal of white braid over it. I could see his fair hair cut to the

texture of moleskin, and hear again his squeaky excitable voice. Head and I had shared a bedroom, the window of which was brushed with the loaded boughs of a fig-tree. We used to lean out over the sill, pulling off the figs and eating them and talking to one another long after we should have been in bed. And when we had eaten so many figs that we both had collywobbles we would be afraid to venture forth to solve the problem owing to a tale we had been told by an old Breton farm-wife of an evil woman's vampire ghost in the habit of kidnapping children and devouring them. The tale must have come down from the time of Gille de Rais who employed a woman to decoy the children he murdered. Their little bones had been found in the cellars of his castle when he was burnt as a sorcerer, and the ruins of that castle were just across the Loire. We had seen them and shuddered over the horrible tale.

The pie-faced nurse came in again and I managed to make her understand that I wanted to know what was being cried in the street below.

"Σύκα φρέσκα (seeka freska)," she told me.

Fresh figs! Queer that I should be thinking of the adventures of Head and myself with figs in Brittany so many years before, and that up and down this dusty Athenian street a fruit-vendor's voice should be crying 'fresh figs' to-day. And then I was seeing instead of the big quarto of Lucian beside me the slim dark-green volume of the Cambridge University Press which included the *Charon*. That was the Greek text set for the scholarship examination at St. Paul's School in September, 1894, to wrestle with which these weeks in Brittany were intended to equip me. I had only been eleven years old; but I could remember what fun it was to be reading a genuine work in Greek after the long boredom of exercises in grammar, and with what clearness I had pictured the old ferryman's indignation when Menippus had not so much as an obol to

pay his fare across the Styx. It had been with Mr. Spencer that I had stumbled through the witty dialogue. We worked out of doors whenever it was feasible in that not too sunny summer; and beside me on the emerald Breton grass, which grew lush beside a wooded pond, there was always a butterfly-net, for that was the heyday of butterfly collecting when to catch a clouded yellow was to fancy one held the world in one's net. Pleasant days! Mr. Spencer of the deep bass voice and big hooked nose, was not a man to let a sentence of Greek interfere with the legitimate occupations of boyhood, and the toughest aorist was allowed to remain undigested if a silver-washed fritillary should come sailing over the brambles by the edge of the wood. The other master, Mr. Sankey, was responsible for my Latin and it was with his help I had staggered through the first book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. A tall man with what seemed a huge cleanshaven face, he was just as sympathetic as Mr. Spencer and never unwilling to let the tale of Deucalion and Pyrrha halt when a white-admiral was sighted over the top of an oak tree.*

I must have been whistling again, for the pie-faced nurse put her head round the door and repeated crossly: 'μή σφουρίζετε,' adding what I divined to be a reminder that there were other patients in the clinic who might be disturbed.

This time the negative reminded me of those conditional sentences which shed a blight upon the future of the budding Greek scholar. Present particulars and present generals, εἰ and εἰν, μή always in the protasis, οὐ always in the apodosis, optatives and subjunctives waiting like Scylla and Charybdis to rend or swallow the wretched youth,

* I wonder if he ever dreamed, when he sat on that Breton grass, puffing away at a very large pipe while a small boy ploughed through Ovid's hexameters, that he himself would one day suffer a metamorphosis as surprising as any recounted by Ovid from an assistant-master in charge of a low class at a private school into the Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain.

who blind to the beauty of a really exact medium for the written word supposed that εἴ and εἶν had merely been invented to destroy his peace of mind . . . but of εἴ and εἶν I have written already in *Sinister Street*, and what I have said about Dr. Brownjohn there will serve without the alteration of a word to describe my experience with the great F. W. Walker, the High Master of St. Paul's.

Later on that day, when Rendel called to find out how I was getting on, I forgot all about my early struggles with classical Greek in obtaining advice from him how to begin my fresh contest with modern Greek. Busy though he was, he found time to pay me many visits and every time he came he brought with him books he thought I should like to read. Indeed, all the while I was in the clinic people were wonderfully kind about visiting me. Sir Francis Elliot came several times, and used to sit on the edge of the chair by my bed like a grey bird about to fly from its perch at any moment. At one of these brief but delightful visits he told me that the Foreign Office had turned down his suggestion that my services should be employed for propaganda in Athens because they had already appointed a man for the job. This was Gerald Talbot,* of whom more presently.

V came to see me almost every day, entering my room on each occasion as cautiously as a burglar. His suggestion about employing my services had been favourably received, and he was sure that I could count on remaining in Athens.

"The only difficulty, my dear fellow, is the money side of it," V told me, as sitting by the bed he gravely goggled at me through those great horn-rimmed spectacles.

"C has no money to spare for contre-espionage," he went on. "Of course I can pay B's salary out of my funds; but there is still the problem of Liebig. You see, you can't

* Commander Sir Gerald Talbot, K.C.V.O., C.M.G., O.B.E., R.N.V.R.

FRESH FIGS

just get rid of a man in our service. Not that I think Liebig would turn nasty . . . but still. . . .”

V gazed before him and, as he tried to extract from the antiseptic air of the clinic a just cause and impediment against Liebig's remaining in Athens, he shook his head.

“Of course,” he went on, “I might hint to Liebig that he is compromised. In fact the other day he told me himself that he was afraid he was doing no good by remaining on in Athens, and that it might be better if he rejoined his regiment. But I do wish he would make the suggestion definitely. I do *not* like the idea of asking him to hand over his job to somebody else. I am not satisfied with his work. He holds the same rank as myself, which is always a mistake. I think it would be better if you said nothing to Liebig about having talked over the future with me. I shall tell him that G.H.Q. wants to have a liaison officer here. I do hope Deedes will be able to allow you something from his funds. Then, if later on I can persuade Liebig to see he really has outlived his utility in Athens, perhaps he will make a formal request to be transferred, in which case you can be seconded at once. But you do appreciate, don't you, that in our service we cannot afford to let anybody we have employed nurture any kind of grievance? It might be extremely dangerous.”

As he said this V turned to look apprehensively over his shoulder at the white door of my bedroom.

“Of course,” he asked, shaking his head, “there is no chance of our being overheard in here?”

“And anyway,” I said encouragingly, “nobody in the clinic speaks a word of English.”

But by this time V had moved across to the door on tip-toe and was opening it with excessive caution. Apparently the glance he had of the empty white corridor reassured him, for he closed the door and sat down again by my bed.

“You can never be sure about anything in our service,”

he told me with a hint of reproach. "You may not think that anybody speaks English in this clinic; but, my dear boy, you can never be sure."

I did not realize at this date to what an extent his position of responsibility in the secret-service had begun to prey upon V's imagination. Moreover, in spite of my own experience as an amateur spy catcher in Mytilene and elsewhere, I was still such a novice that my senior's manner was bound to be impressive. Finally, the will to believe existed in myself. There may be none so blind as he who will not see, but the converse is equally true. Athens had presented itself to my imagination as a city not less mysteriously romantic than eighteenth-century Venice. I had no desire to look on through the weary eyes of a bored and sceptical observer at the masque that was being played. My object in writing these memories is as I have already said to try to recapture the mood in which I passed through various adventures, and I have to free myself from all that sophistication of experience with which the years in passing cover one like the lichen with which a tree protects itself against the salt winds. I have to disem-barrass myself of that deadly sense of the ridiculous which sooner or later always seems to surround my own and other people's behaviour. No one is better aware now than I am how ridiculous V and I were as we talked in whispers about our mysterious work on that sunny Athenian afternoon fifteen years ago; but on the afternoon itself I was still captivated by the infinite romance and excitement that Athens promised, and if V had shown the least inclination to behave like an ordinary human being I should have been quick to resent his implication that the secret-service was not what I as an impressionable writer of fiction wanted it to be. So L and B and C and V danced in a rapture of romantic suggestion across my fancy. I saw them as Schumann may have seen his *Lettres Dansantes* in that

FRESH FIGS

Carnaval which has been one of my musical inspirations and I was thinking that I would choose an initial more subtle, more sinister, more prepotent than any.

"I shall call myself Z," I told my new chief.

"But be very careful never to blot your signature," V warned me with gratifying responsiveness. "Although of course, you will always make a point of burning every scrap of blotting-paper in your office every night before you go home. I always use one of those cast-iron flower pots, and they are quite useful for knocking one's pipe into."

This was the right way to receive the announcement of my chosen initial, and I was as fully determined as any young ensign entrusted with the Colour of his regiment or his King that never should it fall into the hands of the enemy.

V was inclined to regret that the Foreign Office had not agreed to Sir Francis Elliot's suggestion about my doing newspaper propaganda.

"It would have been a perfect blind," he sighed. "Almost as good as my apparent job of looking after the refugees from Asia Minor with my office right opposite the headquarters of the Greek General Staff. I do hope so very much that Deedes will be able to contribute something from his funds. C doesn't like spending money on contre-espionage, for after all," V concluded in a solemn whisper, "the real object of C's organization is to obtain information about the enemy."

"Σύκα φρέσκα," the fruit vendor was crying in the dusty street below.

And "Seeka freska," I was crying within myself, for the prospect before me in Athens when I should emerge from this clinic was not less richly perfumed.

Lady Cuninghame was another of my visitors. She came to preach the gospel of keeping in with the King and the Court party. It was perhaps not unwelcome to her that

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

the bias which her husband believed should be given to our policy inclined in a Royal direction. Whatever might be said in favour of the Venizelists, and she for one thought it was very little, nobody could pretend that in manners and charm they could compare with their opponents. She made me feel that social as well as political sagacity demanded my adherence to the Royalists. She implied that the failure of the Legation as a whole to appreciate the King's point of view was due at least as much to gaucherie as to diplomatic incompetence. She was sure that poor dear Willie Erskine would not be so dull and so obstinate if Viola instead of taking the children back to England had remained in Athens to keep him on the straight path of social correctness. Mark Kerr and Tommy knew so much better where our interests lay than people like Goodhart and Rendel, and really it did seem extraordinary that poor Willie Erskine should have taken up the bearish attitude he had. He had just let himself go since his wife had left, and seemed to think of nothing nowadays but hurrying away from the Chancery to doze over some stupid book. It was impossible to persuade him to go to a party. And of course Sir Francis had been here too long. It was always a mistake to let a Minister remain too long in any country. He began to lose his sense of detachment, and to look at things too much from the point of view of a native. A Minister coming out here with a fresh eye would have seen at once what a mistake it was for us to identify ourselves with what was after all merely a political party. The King could not help feeling this. Only last week he had said quite bitterly that the members of the British Legation seemed to think they were election agents for Venizelos. She had done her best to convey this impression to the Legation; but they were hopelessly prejudiced, and her only reward for trying to do all she could in the very difficult situation out here was to be told that Sir Francis

objected to ladies always going in and out of the Chancery. She had told Lord Craven* only last week that he really must make it clear to them at home how hopeless everything would remain out here until the present members of the Legation were displaced by less prejudiced new-comers who would be prepared to see that there was a great deal more to be said for the King's point of view than for the point of view of a radical upstart like Venizelos, who was after all nothing but a pushing little Cretan lawyer and owed everything to the King's favour. And 'Uffy' Craven had agreed with her, and had promised to make certain discreet representations in exalted circles at home, and she should say exactly the same to Lord Ilchester who was the War Office messenger this week, so perhaps gradually they would begin to realize at home the foolishness of relying too much upon a Legation, hardly one of the members of which could see anything out here except the figure of Venizelos.

And I who at this date was as ignorant of Court intrigue as young Fabrizio del Dongo, who had moreover no Count Mosca to give me the essence of Stendhal's profound and lifelong study of the ways of the world, was only too ready to fancy that Lady Cuninghame spoke with the wit and wisdom of the Duchess Sanseverina in that immortal guide to worldliness, that supreme novel of manners, *La Chartreuse de Parme*. It was no doubt flattering to be assured that my arrival in Athens had created as much curiosity about my *raison d'être* as might almost be called a stir, for I did not know then that in a Balkan capital the arrival of a commercial traveller at a time of political excitement is capable of producing the wildest speculation. It was flattering to be told that the general opinion was that I had been sent here to counter the work of Baron Schenck. Nothing is easier for a novelist than to imagine himself a figure of considerably more importance than he actually is,

* The late Earl of Craven.

and I fear my sense of the ridiculous was at this moment lying dormant beneath the gaudy trappings of romance. Moreover, my own personality was already feeling the effect of that subtle and sinister and perhaps not altogether unambitious initial Z. With so much excitement in store for me outside the white walls of this clinic, with princesses waiting to be converted by my eloquence into passionate adherents of the Entente, with courtiers hopeful of the effect my judicious mind would have upon the attitude of the authorities at home toward the upstarts of New Greece who were trying to rule the roost in Old Greece, with a personality like Baron Schenck of worldwide notoriety already furrowing his brows in perplexity at my advent, it was not surprising that I was longing for my freedom, and that the meals of boiled rice and boiled chicken from being merely unpalatable became absolutely revolting.

The best cook in the world may be puzzled to make the boiled leg of a chicken easily distinguishable from the boiled heel of a boot, and the cook of that clinic was not a good one. Although I like eggs, I have never been able to feel anything but a profound antipathy to the hen herself, and the skin of a hen when boiled is exactly what one would expect such a loathsome animal to bequeath to the living world. That yellowish membrane pitted like a piece of old moth-eaten ermine, with those grey speckles from which dingy feathers once sprouted, can neither be chewed nor swallowed whole. It lies about on the tongue as a piece of damp washing blown from a clothes-line lies upon the grass beneath. Nor is the flesh veiled by that snippet of damp suède easier to masticate.

Every day at one o'clock and at six o'clock the leg of a chicken, with nothing to garnish it but boiled rice, nothing to drink with it except boiled water, lay miserably upon my plate. I used to wonder what happened to the other limbs of the hens whose legs were chopped off to feed me.

FRESH FIGS

A similar puzzle once presented itself when travelling through some of the rural districts of America. Day after day the only part of a chicken I saw was an angular backbone to which adhered like moss to a Gothic ruin a few shreds of coffee-coloured flesh. What happened there to the legs ?

I had to remain in the clinic for nearly a fortnight because my temperature stayed obstinately over two points below normal. Remembering how much excited I was over my future in the secret-service I shudder now to think what kind of state my mind would have been in had it risen to a couple of points above normal. During the last weekend letters came from G.H.Q. which cheered me up considerably about the prospects of that future. Sir Ian Hamilton wrote to say that it would be impossible for him and the General Staff to keep me as a sort of extra attached officer working in Athens, but that if I were well enough to act as a liaison officer between Athens and G.H.Q. staying alternate weeks at one and the other such an arrangement would be possible.

Deedes wrote :

I have just seen Pollen, as it was necessary to regularize your position. All that is necessary is for you not to have yourself reported sick. Barring that, no one will ask where you are (officially I mean). All that will be known is that you will be Ib and employed 'anywhere' by me. You have therefore no cause for worry, but if unfortunately you were laid up for some weeks in Athens your position here would be in nowise altered. I propose if you agree that you should do contre-espionage work at Athens and doing 'de temps à autre' liaison with us.

He added that both George Lloyd* and he thought

* Lord Lloyd of Dolobran.

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

I should consider whether I might not be of more service to my country by accepting Sir Francis Elliot's suggestion to do Press work for the Legation, in which case, however, I should not be able to remain attached to G.H.Q.

Fortunately for my peace of mind this problem had already been solved by the Foreign Office's not requiring my pen.

In another letter Deedes wrote that Graves* had taken on my Newgate Calendar and was panting for fresh material. Finally he promised to find £150 a month for my work out of his own Intelligence funds at G.H.Q.

This offer was a great relief to V, who until he could muster up the determination to get Liebig moved into another sphere of utility was not knowing where to find the money for B work or contre-espionage without dipping too deeply into the funds allowed him for A work or espionage, which was after all his main business in Athens. I asked V if he had said anything yet to Liebig about my intrusion upon his activities, and he nearly nodded his spectacles off his nose in beseeching me to be careful not to let anybody suspect I had anything to do with anybody outside G.H.Q.

"Mind you," said V solemnly, "I do not wish to suggest for a moment, my dear fellow, that Liebig is likely to do anything violent ; but we cannot be too careful in our kind of work, and it will require the utmost tact to get him to see that he has really outlived his sphere of utility in Athens. In fact I do not hesitate to say," V concluded in a low voice and with an apprehensive glance over his shoulder at the closed door, "that the Germans know what he is doing. However, when you come out of here you will be able to judge his work for yourself."

But these talks with my various visitors were only very

* Sir Robert Graves, K.C.M.G.

small oases in a desert of loneliness at that clinic, and most of my time was spent in listening to the street-cries along the noisy sun-parched street below and in meditating upon the past as much as in planning for the future.

There were other letters that week-end forwarded on to me from Imbros which gave me enough to think about in the past. One of these was from Richard Gunstone, the steward of the Junior Common Room at Magdalen, from 'Gunner,' the best loved figure in the College by generation after generation of Magdalen men. I tried to paint his portait as 'Venner' in *Sinister Street*, and the old man himself was always good enough to say that it was a recognizable portrait. He first went to Magdalen as Common Room boy somewhere about 1860, became Steward of the J.C.R. in the 'seventies and did not leave until just before the war. This is how I wrote of him in *Sinister Street* :

'Gunner's office was one of the small ground-floor rooms in Cloisters, but it had long ago been converted to the present use. An inner store-room, to which Gunner always retired to make a cup of squash or to open a bottle of whisky, had once been the bedroom. The office itself was not luxuriously furnished, and the accommodation was small. A window-seat with a view of the college kitchens, a square table, and a couple of Windsor chairs were considered enough for the men who frequented Gunner's every night after hall, and who on Sunday nights after wine in J.C.R. clustered there like a swarm of bees. Gunner's own high chair stood far back in the corner behind his high sloping desk on which, always spread open, lay the great ledger of J.C.R. accounts. On the shelves above were the account books of bygone years in which were indelibly recorded the extravagances of more than thirty years of Magdalen men. Over the fireplace was a gilt mirror of Victorian design stuck round with the fixture cards of the university and the college, with notices of grinds and musical

clubs and debating societies, in fact with all the printed petty news of Oxford. A few photographs of winning crews, a book-case with stores of college stationery, a Chippendale sideboard with a glass case of priced cigars on top, and an interesting drawerful of Gunner's relics above the varnished wainscot completed the furniture. The wall-paper was of that indefinite brownish yellow which one finds in the rooms of old-fashioned solicitors, and of that curious oily texture which seems to produce an impression of great age and at the same time of perfect modernity.

Yet the office itself, haunted though it was by the accumulated personalities of every generation at Magdalen, would scarcely have possessed the magical effect of fusion which it did possess, had not all these personalities endured in a perpetual present through the conservative force of Gunner himself. Richard Gunstone had been Steward of the Junior Common Room for thirty-three years, but he seemed to all these young men that came within the fragrancy of his charm to be as much an intrinsic part of the college as the tower itself. The bearded President, the dry-voiced dons, the deer park, the elms, the ancient doors and traceries, the lawns and narrow entries, the groining and the lattices, were all subordinate in the estimation of the undergraduates to Gunner. He knew the inner history of every rag; he realized why each man was popular or unpopular or merely ignored; he was a treasure-house of wise counsel and kindly advice; he held the keys of every heart. He was an old man with florid, clean-shaven face, a pair of benignant eyes intensely blue, a rounded nose, a gentle voice and most inimitable laugh. Something there was in him of the old family butler, a little more of the yeoman farmer, a trace of the head gamekeeper, a suspicion of the trainer of horses; but all these elements were blended to produce the effect of someone wise and saintly and simple who would trouble himself to heal the lightest wounds and could rouse with a look or a gesture undying affection.

FRESH FIGS

With such a tutelary spirit, it was not surprising the freedom of Gunner's should have been esteemed a privilege that could only be conferred by the user's consciousness of his own right. There was no formal election to Gunner's: there simply happened a moment when the Magdalen man entered unembarrassed that mellow office and basked in that sunny effluence. In this ripe old room, generous and dry as sherry wine, how pleasant it was to sit and listen to Gunner's ripe old stories; how amazingly important seemed the trivial gossip of the college in this historic atmosphere; how much time was apparently wasted here between eight and ten at night, and what a thrill it always was to come into college about half-past nine of a murky evening and stroll round Cloisters to see if there was anybody in Gunner's. It could after all scarcely be accounted a waste of time to sit and slowly mature in Gunner's and sometimes about half-past nine the old man would be alone, the fire would be dying down and during the half-hour that remained of his duty, it would be possible to peel a large apple very slowly and extract from him more of the essence of social history than could be gained from a term's reading of great historians even with all the extra lucidity imparted by a course of Mr. So-and-So's lectures.

He had an endless number of stories about old Magdalen men, and the youthful habits of many distinguished men were recorded in that little office of his on the left of the stone steps leading up to the Junior Common Room. He always liked to be asked a question about some bishop or ambassador who had been at Magdalen.

"We'll look up his J.C.R. account," he would say with a chuckle that sounded like a mellow dry sherry being poured out.

And then he would produce from a top shelf a leather-bound volume of the early 'seventies and, turning up the name of the bishop or ambassador, discover that on some

night of long ago a dozen bottles of champagne had been sent up to his room.

"Oh, I remember that night well," Gunner would say. "He got terribly drunk. His friends had to put him to bed. He was a very wild fellow when he was up here."

Gunner's fund of anecdote never failed, and some of the last stories he told me were about the Prince of Wales. The King when visiting Gunner in his office had been turning over the current ledger of the year to see how the Heir Apparent's account stood, and had asked what the three-halfpence entered up every day represented. This is how Gunner related the duologue :

"Oh, that's his apple," I told the King.

"What, does he still eat an apple every morning?" said the King to me, "he's always done that."

"'Well,' I said to the King, 'you ought to tell him not to start peeling it till he gets to the bottom of the J.C.R. steps, because they're very slippery, and one day he'll slip and give his head a nasty bump and perhaps cut himself with his penknife. I've told him about it several times, but he'll never listen to me.'"

Then Gunner went on :

"The King was very nice, and he enjoyed the banana trick when I did it for him."

The banana trick had consisted of lighting a piece of paper inside a decanter and by the vacuum set up drawing a banana down inside through the neck.

"And I did Magdalen chimes for him."

One of the old man's tricks had been to attach a piece of string to the tongs for the listener to hold to his ears, while he struck the tongs with the poker and evoked what was supposed to be the sound of Magdalen chimes.

"The King was very homely. He got a good hold of the tongs. I think he enjoyed it. But the Queen was more interested in the cigars. She couldn't make out what the

FRESH FIGS

figures meant in the case with the glass top. 'Why, Ma'am,' I said, 'that's the price of each brand.'

"'Good gracious, Mr. Gunstone,' she said, 'I never knew that cigars had different prices before. I always thought all cigars were the same price.'

"Fancy her thinking that," Gunner had been wont to conclude. "I must say I was very surprised."

Here is the old man's letter which had filled that white room in the clinic with Oxford ghosts :

August 9th, 1915.

My dear Sir,

At last you have sent me an address I can use. I will now begin a letter, though there is little news to send.

You will see we are now living in the country, it is on the way to Shotover Hill. I was very fortunate to let my old house to a Parson and Wife who has a job in Oxford for 3 years.

I do not often go into College. Mr. C. R. Carter (Bursar) sent an invitation to the Wife & I to go to a Service in the College Chapel in commemoration of all of ours who have fallen in the War. We went, it was a very solemn affair. I could not sleep that night for thinking of all those fine young fellows I had parted from only a short time before. Over thirty names read out, and since then many have to be added to the list. You remember J. L. Johnston (Dean) he was up on the cricket ground with us the last time you came to Oxford. He went out at night to get in the wounded, got shot, and when his men went to find him the Germans had got him and he has not been heard of since, over a month ago now. A Doctor told my son we must give him up for lost. I gave Mr. Cookson that letter you wrote to me from the S.S. Roma in May for him to put your name and rank on his list.

He is not at College now, I hear he has work in London

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

(War work). Mr. Benecke is the only Don up, the place is deserted, only 30 undergrads out of our usual 150 came up last term. I think it will be worse in October. I went to see my old room the other day. "Oh my," what a change. The wall-paper you mention (as brownish yellow) is all gone, it is no longer like an office but a Chocolate shop in Bond Street, it may be better? But the old charm of the place is gone for ever.

I have been looking at your portrait (postcard) you look ill. What is it, the climate? On Friday last I got a letter from a Magd. man. Lt. G. M. Smyth of the 6th Loyal North Lancs, XIII Division, Mediterranean Force, who said that the heat and flies are dreadful, in Saturday's D.M. I see he is wounded. I am so sorry, he is such a jolly chap. Day after day I find Magdalen men in the list of killed and wounded, of course you see the list but you don't know they are our men unless up about your time. I saw that you had been writing to the papers some time ago. Books will have to go to the wall till the war is over and then you must write a war book. How is "Sinister Street" going? The Pre and Lady Warren are away, the last time I saw him he was very lame and old. I still keep very fit for my age. The Wife is in splendid form, she joins with me in wishing you a safe return. And with many thanks for your letter and P.C.

I am, dear Sir,

Ever yours faithfully,

Gunner.

So they had turned the old man's room into a Bond Street chocolate shop, had they? I suspected the hand of Gynes in that. Gynes had been the College messenger, and it had been generally felt that he was the only member of the College staff with a definite enough personality to carry on the great Gunner tradition. He was deeply interested in

the sporting prowess of the College, ready at any moment to criticize in his vibrant throaty voice the form of Wet Bob or Dry Bob. But he was a modernist. Golf was his real game, and it was admitted that he might have been a really great professional. Even in the first years of the twentieth century it was obvious that golf was going to destroy cricket ultimately, though at that date its destructive influence had not been reinforced by lawn tennis, which was still called 'pat-ball' and regarded with good-natured contempt as a lazy form of mild exercise. Gynes, however, was not merely a modernist in sport. He was an amateur of belles lettres and had a collection of all the so-called decadent writers of the 'nineties. The shelves of his rooms in Cowley Road had been bright with *Yellow Books* and *Savoys* and the delicate mauves and slim gilt edges of hedonist poets. Gynes had been a portent. Would he live long enough to find himself old-fashioned?

And then with a smile I was remembering the visit Gynes had once paid to Paris with Mr. Chaundy during an Easter vacation, both of them on the look out for book bargains along the left bank of the Seine. In those days Mr. Chaundy was not a famous bookseller on his own account, but managed a minority business in the High called William George's Sons of Bristol.

At the beginning of the summer term I had asked Mr. Chaundy how the visit to Paris with Gynes had passed off.

"Well, as a matter of fact, I got a bit fed up with Gynes," Mr. Chaundy replied with some bitterness in his tone, "because I found he'd been going all round Paris saying that he was Viscount Gynes and that I was his valet."

Yes, I felt sure it had been Gynes who had abolished the dingy yellowish brown wallpaper in Gunner's little office.

Enclosed in the old man's letter was a half sheet of that so familiar college notepaper on one side of which Gunner

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

had copied for me what I fancied was the first poem he had ever written :

Magdalen College,
Oxford

DESERTED

*No sound across the Cloistered quad
As daylight fades away,
No laughter borne upon the air,
No light with cheerful ray.*

*Where are the sounds of long ago
That echoed through these halls?
Nought but silence now is found
Among the old grey walls.*

*The heavy doors look sinister,
Deserted is the stair
Stilled are the steps for evermore
That used to enter there.*

On the back of this half sheet the old man had written the names of some of the killed—about forty already, a dozen of whom were contemporaries of my own. The white room in the clinic was thronged for a moment with shapes and rich with colour. . . . Leander pink, the scarlet and lilies of the Magdalen cox, Authentic blazers, vivid Rambler ties, the black and white of the Soccer team . . . the black . . . and the white room again.

I had received by the same mail a list of Oxford men now serving. Magdalen was third with 670, Christ Church and New College being first with 780 each. But then those two colleges could draw on an average of 300 undergraduates and Magdalen on no more than 160, so that proportionately Magdalen was far ahead of any. Such a figure as 670 meant

that practically every Magdalen man for twenty years was in the Navy or the Army. It had been impossible during the last months to keep pace with the casualty lists, and in this letter of Gunner's I heard for the first time of the deaths of many old friends, most of whom I had last seen in the fulness of their youth at Oxford. And to hear of them now from that dear old man, who was devoting his retirement to collecting every scrap of information he could glean from the newspapers about the careers of men for whom such a career was the last they had been expecting when they had shaken hands with him and come out for the last time from his little office to see the lawn in the middle of Cloisters glowing green in the June sunshine, was a more poignant experience than I am able to convey without seeming to be indulging in sentimental emotion. Moreover, with some bitterness of spirit, I feel that, if the war had come to an end in that autumn of 1915 (as I am reminded by a letter to my wife of this August we were all of us confidently expecting, so confidently that I was writing anxiously about the necessity of getting up the daffodil bulbs and transplanting them from Cornwall to Italy so that I might not miss their flowers when I should be home again in the Spring) the sacrifice which these contemporaries of mine had made would hardly have been appreciated. It was not until the material discomfort of the war began to afflict the civil population that there was induced a state of mind which was to respond to the obscene horrors of post-war books written with a self-pity that expressed the self-pity of their readers. Those who volunteered to give their lives and gave them without complaint are not praised in such books, lest a hint of admiration should render to war one tattered shred of the glory that was once, by women mostly, believed to enfold it. There may have been nothing heroic in the readiness of those young men of 1914 and 1915 to volunteer. There may have been nothing behind their

impulse except a desire to do the right thing, comparable in kind yet not in degree to the impulse which would prevent their wearing a black tie with tails or brown boots with a top hat. However, since none of them considered himself a hero and since none of them made a book about his sufferings, the living might spare them at least as much respect as they give to writers by whose sufferings some of us might feel more pitifully moved if they did not seem to have lavished all the pity in the world upon themselves.

“ Seeka freska ! σῦκα φρέσκα ! ”

I suppose we should just be grateful that we are still alive and still able to eat fresh figs. Perhaps our stale palates are to blame for what seems their lack of flavour.

In the next letter I opened on that hot afternoon was the news that Tom Overton had been killed at Suvla. But how had Tom Overton found himself at Suvla ? His presence there was unimaginable. It had been easy enough to picture my Oxford friends leading their men into action and being killed. Their behaviour would have been but an extension of behaviour I had often witnessed at Summer Eights or cup-ties, or with the Magdalen and New College beagles, or at grinds in the Bicester country. But my last picture of Tom Overton was of a little boy in a faded light blue smock, who had so strong a personality at seven years old that it was impossible for me to provide him in fancy with the personality developed by the school and university life that lay between 1901 and 1915. He was for me when I heard of his death at Suvla still seven years old in a faded light blue smock. And yet, some of my memories of Tom Overton were connected with soldiering. The very first picture of him that came back to my mind that hot afternoon was his presence at a sham fight between the Ware company of the First Volunteer (Hertfordshire) Battalion of the Bedfordshire Regiment and the Hertford company reinforced by the Haileybury School Corps. I was in

FRESH FIGS

command of the vanguard and expecting every moment to see the enemy's scarlet debouching from the woodland ahead. When there was no sign of them, Tom, who was naturally anxious to take part in the fighting, had been told to crawl along the bed of a dried-up water-course and try to get a glimpse of the enemy. My spy was some time away. Telling my men to keep close cover, I had strolled along the lane we were holding and had hardly turned the corner when four small Haileybury boys leapt at me with fixed bayonets and squeaked :

"Surrender your sword, sir. You're our prisoner."

By all the rules of sham warfare I certainly was, and I had to hand over my sword with as good a grace as a subaltern of barely eighteen could display in the presence of four privates whose average age was about thirteen. At that moment Tom Overton had returned from his scouting expedition ; and now in this clinic I could still see the thrust of his deeply cleft chin and the puzzled frown between his blue eyes as he heard the tale of my carelessness.

"Get away, you kid, and don't follow us about," one of my captors told him loftily.

"He's a friend of mine," I explained.

My captors looked doubtful.

"But we've got to keep you prisoner," one of them said. "There's a barn along here where I think you'll have to stay."

"Oh, I'll give you my parole," I offered airily.

The four schoolboys looked more doubtful than ever ; but none of them was bold enough to admit that he did not know what giving one's parole meant. So, as far as I was concerned, the sham fight ended in the dimness and drouth of an old barn where Tom Overton and I discussed the possibility of escape, while outside four fierce Lower School boys in scarlet marched round and round our prison with

fixed bayonets, until a distant bugle proclaimed the sham fight at an end.

So now when I heard of Tom Overton's death in action at Suvla it was no khaki-clad subaltern of the Lincolns that I pictured falling, but a diminutive figure in a light blue faded smock, with deeply cleft out-thrust chin small and shapely, who was leading his men through the aromatic scrub under the fire of Turkish guns, which he would be saying all the while were only pretend. He had been the most enchanting small boy I had known, and thinking of field and copse, of stream and spinney and lane I had explored with him and his brother Ted, older by a year, my memory went back to the events which brought me into green Hertfordshire.

I had managed to leave St. Paul's in the February of 1900 through the good offices of the doctor to whom I confided that if I had to walk once more along Hammer-smith Road, up and down which I had walked four times a day for nine years I should go mad. My younger brother had already been driven mad enough by the boredom of school to enlist at the age of just fifteen in the Imperial Yeomanry and had very nearly succeeded in getting out to South Africa before he was dragged back to a more conventional education. There must have been something in my eye which had warned the doctor that I would do anything rather than endure any longer the intolerable futility and monotony of my present existence. So, instead of going back to school, I had been allowed to restore my nervous system by two or three months at Bournemouth . . . the rhododendrons in Branksome woods . . . talking to Cardinal Vaughan and marvelling at the superb ivory of his countenance . . . tales from Colonel Sartorius of big game . . . Mafeking night and one of the guests at the Hydro coming home late and in trying to cross the glass roof of the Turkish bath to climb into his room crashing through

it . . . and after Bournemouth Switzerland . . . the darkness under the pollarded lime-trees beside the lake at Lucerne . . . the honey and rolls that tasted so good in the morning . . . Grindelwald . . . mauve violas among the melting snow and the Jüngfrau against a leaden sky . . . the chequered shade of a square in Interlaken . . . and then Geneva . . . shimmering silver in the haze of summer. It had been there I had learnt the wisdom that comes from losing all one's money at *petits chevaux*. To this day the memory of the way my last five-franc piece was raked in by the croupier will warn me against ultimate extravagance, for while waiting for a remittance I went without food for three days and slept for three nights on a bench beside the lake. After that I had spent a delightful summer feeding on peaches and salads and skim-milk cheeses, chasing butterflies all day long across the red sun-burnt soil of the Lyonnais, playing piquet with a French uncle who finally flung all the cards out of the window when I was 4,200 points up on him, and reading in Tauchnitz editions a novel a day . . . the dewy lips of Rhoda Broughton's delicious heroines . . . hard riding with Henry Kingsley . . . amazed adolescent thrills from *The Woman Who Did* and *The Yellow Aster*. . . . BALZAC and what seemed the revelation of life as it is really lived after the gardenia-scented by-ways of the decadence to which a year's previous reading had been devoted . . . my own first story written in an arbour of jasmine . . . a ridiculous story about a duel . . . the excitement of reading in the *Daily Mail* about the massacre of the Legations in Pekin . . . marvellous horrors, and all of them absolutely imaginary . . . travelling south on a hot September night in a railway carriage full of provincial mayors on their way to visit the Paris Exhibition free of charge . . . the empty azure of the early morning sky over the forest of Fontainebleau seen from the windows of the train . . . a long hot dusty day

at the Exhibition . . . no room to lie down on the boat from Havre that night . . . an attempt to have a hot bath . . . the soap will not lather . . . I am bathing in warm oil which has somehow got into the bath instead of water . . . a cold douche to get rid of it . . . a long Sunday at Southampton waiting for a train into Hampshire . . . then with a heavy cold passing Responsions and taking digs in Longwall only to be told by the College authorities that I was too young at seventeen to come up to the University. To keep me out of mischief that year before Oxford I was sent to the Rev. Arnold Overton at High Cross in Hertfordshire to be coached by him for the arduous task of getting through the matriculation at Magdalen. Neither he nor I could pretend that there was any excuse for wasting much time over an examination which I could have passed with my head tied up in a sack. So I studied German with him, choosing perversely as my introduction to German literature a translation of Ibsen's *Doll's House*. The real value of that year, however, did not lie in the knowledge of German I acquired from reading *Das Puppenheim*, nor in the free verse I wrote under the inspiration of the French symbolists. The value of that year lay in watching the seasons' progress through a quiet country year in a house that was exquisitely appropriate as a stepping-stone to Oxford, and in the companionship of two delightful children, one of whom had been killed at Suvla.

"Seeka freska! Seeka freska!"

As I lay there, listening to those raucous cries from the dusty Athenian street, I sought to cool the present by a recollection of the green past. I was with Tom Overton looking for bullfinches' nests in the snowberry thickets beside that river to whose slow and dimpled stream the overhanging trees gave a patina as to the muscles of an old bronze . . . and a moment after I was with Tom Overton in an orchard where the red apples fell softly among the

thick moist grass, both of us armed with wooden swords, both of us wearing paper cocked hats and waiting for a party of Indians with spears of hazelwood and adorned with the cast feathers of silver Wyandottes and black Minorcas. A few years would pass. The Indians would turn into Turks, and what had been a game would become horribly real.

“ Seeka freska ! Seeka freska ! ”

The cry of fresh figs along that dusty Athenian street made fetid by excess of sunlight was a mockery ; but the words tormented the mind into conjuring from the past more visions of coolness and former peace. I was walking with the Overton boys along a road that rang like iron in the bleak January frost. When the wintry desolation was seeming too grim I could re-conjure the thrill of seeing the first silky buds of the breaking shallows like pearls along the hedgerows. Could they have ever really existed, those iron-bound roads ? But there was that snowy night of the route march when reeling with fatigue I toiled back from the drill hall, after the Company had been dismissed, towards High Cross, leaning upon my bicycle in a dream of bed, too tired to pedal it up the steep snowy hill out of Ware. Volunteering memories from the past began to throng the memory, contending with the lassitude of my body and with the gloomy meditations evoked by those letters. I was looking proudly at what must have been almost the last commission granted by Queen Victoria. I was in command of my half company which was helping to line the streets of Hertford for the solemn proclamation of Edward VII as King. I was detraining at Aldershot in command of the advance party of the battalion sent to pitch our camp in preparation for the August manœuvres, and feeling rather overweighted by my responsibilities. I was marching my men through Aldershot and trying to return correctly the ceremonious salutes of sentry after sentry as they seemed

to rush out at us like cuckoos from a clock. We were to camp in a spot known as Scrogg's Bottom, and it was seeming that I should spend the rest of the day telling the colour-sergeant to inquire of knowledgeable-looking individuals whether we were on the right road for Scrogg's confounded Bottom, and then the colour-sergeant was murmuring that he thought the men would be glad to fall out for a minute in order to obey what he described poetically as a call of nature. As I had been unable to ascertain from the drill manual the proper word of command for this business, I had told the sergeant he must arrange matters. I could hear him shouting :

"Company ! Shun ! Stand at ease ! Pile arms ! " And at last : " Fall out, men, and be quick about it ! "

No sooner had the men fallen out in what seemed a suitably bare spot than we heard an agonized cry about fifty yards away, and from a marquee in process of erection there came running a dapper little officer with a firmly wedged eyeglass, who was shouting at me to call off my men.

" I can't call them off till they've finished, sir," I had replied apologetically.

" But you must, sir," he insisted. " That's the site we've chosen for our mess tent. This is the camp of the First Volunteer Battalion of the Oxford Light Infantry, Home Counties Brigade."

" Home Counties Brigade ? " I repeated. " Why, that's our Brigade. Do you know where Scrogg's Bottom is ? It must be somewhere near here."

" No, I don't know where Scrogg's Bottom is," said the Light Infantry subaltern petulantly. " But how can we pitch our mess tent there ? "

" I'm very sorry, sir, but I couldn't know that you'd chosen this site. Colour-sergeant, tell the men to fall in at once."

And on we marched toward Scrogg's Bottom, leaving the Oxfords to find a less marshy site for their mess tent.

And then I was dozing on a sofa in our own mess tent which had been got up by round about midnight, and the corporal of the guard was waking me up to say that four drunks from the Buckinghamshire Regiment had been cutting our tent ropes and what was to be done with them.

"Put them in the guard-tent, corporal, till morning," I had commanded quickly.

But in the morning with the excitement of the battalion's arrival I had forgotten all about those offenders, and it was not until the following evening that I remembered their existence when an officer of their own battalion came round to ask if by chance we had seen four of his men who were missing.

And now I was hearing Henry Croft, the senior subaltern of my company, invite me on Sunday afternoon to take a stroll with him and see what the little boys were like nowadays. Henry Croft was then up at Trinity Hall and I had not yet gone up to Oxford ; but when we swaggered through the lines of the Public Schools Brigade, with our canes under our arms, we really did feel years and years older than the little boys. Yet the little boys were perhaps less impressed by us than we were by ourselves, for when we reached the Shrewsbury lines I heard one Salopian exclaim to another :

"My god, what damned awful side Henry Croft is putting on. I never saw anybody put on such side, did you ?"

And he was about right, for though I was trying hard to put on as much side myself it was really impossible to compete with Henry Croft. And now he is Brigadier-General Sir Henry Page Croft, a Baronet, a Member of Parliament, and all sorts of things, but whatever he may become I wager he will never put on so much side as he did that Sunday afternoon thirty years ago, when he was seeing what the little boys of his old school looked like.

And then I was toiling across Laffan's Plain, endeavouring to keep my half-company in extended order. They were the days of the Boer War, and extended order was the ruling passion of those responsible for the fortunes of the British Army.

"Why in god's name aren't your men in proper extended order, Captain Boyd?" some red-faced major would come galloping up to demand.

"Why the deuce isn't your half-company in proper extended order, Mr. Mackenzie?" the captain of my company would splutter.

"Why *don't* you keep the men in extended order, colour-sergeant," I would expostulate, for a junior subaltern knows better than to swear at his guardian angel.

"Why the blank blank don't you keep those blanking perishers over there in their proper extended order, Corporal Jones?" the sergeant would demand.

But what the corporal said to the men, and what the men said to one another about the corporal and everybody else upward as far as the Commander-in-Chief could only be printed in a book that was intended to make people grasp what a terrible thing war really is.

In the end it was always the subalterns who suffered most from extended order, because sergeants in the Volunteers were usually too fat and too elderly to run rapidly enough along the quarter of a mile of country which a half-company in proper extended order will occupy.

There was to have been a great battle at Aldershot that year, the greatest sham fight that had ever been staged. Over thirty thousand combatants were taking part in it, and that the battle in the end never took place at all had been due to myself. My half-company was on the extreme left flank and we were advancing, in extended order as usual, to meet the enemy face to face. Our objective was marked on a handkerchief map, which the wind fluttered

in every direction. By giving a half-left turn when I ought to have kept straight on, the whole army was deflected from its proper direction, and the extreme right flank just missed the enemy's extreme right. Two armies marched on away from one another for about three miles while a quantity of excited umpires galloped all over the place to try to get the two armies to turn and fight like men. But by now we were thinking more about lunch than fighting. However, it had been tiresome to carry a large number of rounds of blank cartridges for the whole of a hot August day without firing a shot, so to cheer up my men I ordered them to open rapid fire on some of the umpires at six hundred yards, and we had blazed away most of our ammunition before one of them galloped up and told us the battle was over.

After a sham fight the officers used to be gathered together and addressed by the chief umpire ; but, as the two armies had not seen anything of one another on this occasion, the chief umpire had nothing to tell us except that we had had no business to lose one another. Anyway, we should not have paid any attention to the pow-wow, because we were noting that our lunch wagon had arrived and, having been on the move since five o'clock, we were now at two o'clock ready to eat. And then the awful news had come that, although the officers' lunch had arrived, the men's dinner had not, so that we had to march all the way back to camp without so much as a drink. What a march back that had been ! It really made the heat of Athens bearable to think about it. I was remembering the way some parched bandmen had flung down their instruments in the sandy road and rushed to plunge their faces into a horse-trough by the wayside. I could see again that endless column of scarlet and grey and dark green uniforms winding wearily on through the reeking dust of a brazen afternoon. I was remembering how, when at last we had marched almost

jauntily into camp to the strains of *The Young May Moon*, we had sat with our cool drinks in the shade of the mess tent and watched superciliously from our deep wicker chairs the stragglers of the Second Volunteer Battalion limping into camp by twos and threes. We considered ourselves the crack volunteer battalion of the British Army, and could boast that of nine hundred not one man had fallen out on that grilling August day. While I was thinking in the clinic of that long grey and green and scarlet column, the beginning of it seemed to stretch much further back than the country round Aldershot and to become with distance thinner and thinner until like a strand of coloured silk it seemed to thread its way through the warp and woof of my earliest childhood. I was at school again, staring with contemptuous pity at the poor bugshooters drilling on the gravel. A miserable existence theirs, with nothing to reward them for their patriotism except release from the weekly hour of gym. Had the school corps worn a scarlet uniform, it might have attracted more of us to join; but that dull crocodile-green turn-out was discouraging. Moreover, to be attached to a regiment known as the Kensington Rifles, for all it might be the Thirteenth Battalion of the Rifle Brigade, savoured of comic opera, and not even the strident and tawdry patriotism of the first year of the Boer War could make us take the bugshooters seriously.

The British Empire had reached its glowing climax with the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria. Future historians might consider the claims of the Stop The War meeting in Trafalgar Square in September, 1899, to provide the moment when the inevitable decline began.

"Seeka freska! Seeka freska!"

Lying in that clinic with a temperature below normal, it was hard to believe that sixteen years earlier I had been a unit in the concourse of hysterical oafs who had gathered from every part of London in order to stop that Stop The

War meeting, as difficult as it is for me now, fifteen years later still, to realize that the equally absurd person lying in that Athens clinic and filled with fantastic notions about the secret-service was also myself.

There have been many famous gatherings in Trafalgar Square, but I should doubt if there was ever a larger number of stupid people gathered together in it than on that September afternoon. Not a single one of the orators who were haranguing the crowd from the pedestals of the lions had a chance of making his voice heard above the roaring of *Rule Britannia* by the audience. My companion was Guy Pears* who was going to Woolwich next term, and as an embryo sapper bursting with indignation against the unpatriotic swine who were daring to point out that war with the Transvaal might be neither judicious nor just. Among the unpatriotic swine I caught sight of McDonnell, whose tumbled red hair had nearly as much eloquence as his own eloquent tongue. McDonnell was an elder brother of M. F. J. McDonnell† who was a classmate and friend of mine at St. Paul's, and who is now the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Palestine. He too had tumbled red hair in those days and much eloquence. Guy Pears and I were shocked to see the elder McDonnell standing there between the paws of one of the lions and shaking his fist like the good Irish patriot he was at the beery exhalation of *Rule Britannia* by the mob. He had not so long left St. Paul's himself and was still up at Cambridge, and we felt as we stood there on the top of an omnibus gazing down at his expressive hair that he was involving us in a common shame. So Guy Pears snatched from its socket the little Union Jack which in those days London Road Car omnibuses carried to mark their independence of the London General Omnibus Company, and while he waved it martially to and fro he

* Col. G. B. Pears, M.C., R.E.

† Sir Michael McDonnell.

attempted to explain to the other occupants of the bus what an amount of patriotic virtue animated all Paulines except the red-headed orator preaching peace between the paws of that indifferent lion below.

"Seeka freska ! Seeka freska !"

But these memories were no more than a temporary cloud of dust obscuring the brightness of that column's array. Much farther back in the past, and beyond the murk of that Boer War which had brought as much disillusionment to the youth of my generation as the last war brought to its own generation, and as the next war will bring to a future generation, that column was still winding for my fancy. I was a child of eight at Folkestone when Shorncliffe was a word of magic power. And it was still magical, for I could fill the Athenian air with the sound of distant bugles and could smell beyond the stale reek of the sun-swept street that immemorial English seaside smell, of warm soft asphalt and fruit-stained baskets and tamarisks and salt sand. I had left the Lees behind and was walking over fields of parched and chalky herbage, in which the poppies and ox-eyed daisies grew scant and stunted, to where the white tents of Shorncliffe thrilled the sight with their promise of fatigue parties and parades and polo-playing officers, and all the varicoloured work and play of a military camp.

But now the column was winding back far beyond Shorncliffe to a review on Southsea Common, at which in some ways I was less aware of having once been present than at the famous Rochester review where Mr. Pickwick made the acquaintance of Mr. Wardle. A moment of ghostly retrospection, during which I seemed to behold red and blue troops like a Turkey carpet over the Common, and I had shrunk to such smallness that by standing on tip-toe I could just peer over the window-sill of a room on the ground floor of a small Portsmouth house

and watch amid the sound of brass and drums scarlet soldiers, their spiked helmets glittering, go marching by to church followed by blue soldiers, whose spikes instead of being pointed ended in a little brass ball, the difference between the helmets assuming for my childish mind a portentous, an almost appalling significance of meaning, which though somehow comprehended was of course quite ineffable. And even now in that clinic I was feeling that, could I but remember a little more clearly what I had thought about those helmets as a child of three, I should solve the riddle of life as one seems to have solved it sometimes, waking from a dream. The colour of that scarlet and of that blue, as it came back to me across the years, was in remembrance so much richer than any colours I had beheld since or was ever likely to behold again that such words as scarlet and blue were a joke to describe the immortal dyes in which my childish spirit was drenched. The soldiers I saw that Sunday morning would perhaps have not long come back from fighting at Tel-el-Kebir. But what was that when in a porch sweet with honeysuckle I had sat on the knees of a veteran of Waterloo, wondering more at the look of his ancient hands than at the stories he would be telling me?

“Seeka freska! Seeka freska!”

Fresh figs indeed! And how pulpy they must have seemed to that old man mumbling of Hougoumont and Quatre Bras.

But soldiers red and blue were not all that I saw marching past those new red-brick barracks at Portsmouth. The column had turned now to a dirty drab, and I was looking back to stare after a body of men who, with shovels and picks over their shoulders, walked with a dragging gait as well they might, for they were chained in gangs. And now from forty-five years ago the lean face of one of those convicts still haunts my fancy with its expression, and I can

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

still see the weary lift of his chained leg and the aimlessness in his eyes. And it was by turning round to stare in fascination at those wretched men and at the bearded warders who marched beside them, rifles on their dark shoulders, that I walked into the wall of Portsmouth barracks and gashed my cheek deeply against one of those pointed bricks with which the poetic builder had tried to relieve the monotony of a blank wall. Plenty of colour now to remember: the scarlet of the sentry at the gate, the crude red of the new brick wall, the red flowers nodding in the bonnet of an angry nurse, and richest of all the deep crimson thunder-drops of blood upon the pavement. How ridiculous that in every rough proof of a photograph that scar should still appear the most conspicuous feature of my face! The monuments that the body rears to itself are indeed grossly pretentious.

And then at last that long column found a beginning away over in Londonderry in February, 1885, when for the first time I had become aware of soldiers in action. I had woken in my cot to hear the tramp-tramp of feet in the darkness of the midnight without, and my mother had carried me to the window. Pulling back the curtains, she had pointed to the dim forms marching past in greatcoats with fixed bayonets to guard from rescue two priests who were under arrest, and whose faces beheld in the wan rays of a street lamp filled me with compassion. I had been barely two years old, and yet when I looked back to that dim Irish midnight I could realize how deeply that scene had influenced my political sympathies, but now. . . .

“Σῦκα φρέσκα! Seeka freska!”

I had begun to weary utterly of my detention in the clinic of the waxed linoleum floor, of the white furniture, of the sounds floating in from the street below, of the pie-faced nurse and her thermometer, of reading, of killing an occasional mosquito between the pages of a book, and of the

gradually growing conviction that unless I could get hold of a more practical text-book with which to study modern Greek I might be equipped for reading the Greek newspapers, but that I certainly should never be equipped to carry on a conversation. There is much to be said against novelists, but there is this to be said for them—they do fix a language. Greece has not yet produced a sufficiently great novelist to take the δημοτική (demotike) or popular tongue and compel the nation to accept it as literature. Gaelic at the present day suffers from the same lack. The Greeks have a theory that they talk like their newspapers, which mercifully they do not. They are ashamed to face the fact that the spoken language has lost many words which they still sedulously print. You will find a baker advertising that he sells ἄρτος (artos). Yet you may go inside his shop to buy some bread and perhaps find that he does not know what you want until you ask him for ψωμί (psomi) instead of ἄρτος, and so with fishmongers and wine-merchants and many another trade. When there was a proposal to translate the Greek Testament into modern Greek there were riots in Athens, so dearly do the people cling to a pretence that they do not talk the language they really talk. Later on at Athens I secured an invaluable book called *An Echo of Spoken Greek* from which I learnt more in a week than I had learnt from other grammars and conversational manuals in a year. Greek friends of mine when they saw the volume I was studying held up dismayed hands.

“Why will you study such a book?” they asked. “That will only teach you the way the common people talk.”

And when I used to tell them that it was the way they all talked among themselves, if they would only have the honesty to admit it, they would assure me most solemnly that they had never talked like that. I believe they were speaking sincerely and that if one had taken a gramophone

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

record of their domestic speech they would have expected to hear sentences worthy of Demosthenes issuing from the horn.

“ Seeka freska ! Seeka freska ! ”

By the month of September my temperature had risen to normal, and glad I was to be out of the clinic and back in the Hotel d'Angleterre.

Readers may justifiably be thinking that from the point of view of Athenian memories it is not a page too soon. Yet could I convey how utterly bored I was with my own company except by boring my readers with it ? And they have this advantage over me that, whereas they can skip my convalescence, I could not skip that boiled rice and the legs of those chickens.

CHAPTER V

EARLY ABSURDITIES OF SECRET-SERVICE

THE first thing I did on getting out of the clinic was to make the acquaintance of Liebig, whose real name need not be disclosed. He was actually a regular officer with the rank of major, a stocky swarthy man of good Maltese family, who had been employed on secret-service work for the last nineteen years; and a strange, exotic figure he must have seemed when at intervals he took his place at the officers' mess of the old Line battalion to which he belonged. At this date he was living in the Pension Merlin, a well known Athenian boarding-house run by a Levantine Englishwoman.

When I called on Liebig that afternoon, he was sitting in his shirtsleeves writing at a desk; and in a corner of the room a plump pink-faced man with a heavy fair moustache, also in shirtsleeves, was banging away at a typewriter. Liebig's reception reminded me of an actor-manager's reception of an author who has sent him a play to read. He was naturally anxious to impress upon me that I knew nothing about writing plays, that he had in his desk all the plays he could possibly want for years to come, and that unless I had been brought to his notice by one of his backers nothing would have induced him to waste his time in giving me an interview.

Apart from there being some justification for Liebig's attitude, I never have minded and never shall mind being told that I am a hopeless novice. I fancy it must be a tribute to the exquisitely innocent expression of my

countenance which always leads people to take me under their wing and tell me how little I know about anything. If I buy an island, people write from all over the world to assure me that I have bought the very island I do not want, one which, had they known I was thinking of buying it, they would have warned me against. When I grew interested in the gramophone, people came from all over the world to tell me how little I knew about the gramophone and what mistakes I should continue to make about anything connected with the gramophone until I had had at least a quarter of a century's experience of it. Gardeners have eyed my too rapid acquirement of horticultural knowledge with disgusted suspicion and have implored me to realize that I could begin to talk about flowers when I should have had twenty years more of that hard practical experience which fills its possessor with a justifiable contempt for theory. Even when I began modestly to mention to people that I owned a Siamese cat I used to be told that I could not be expected to know anything about Siamese cats for years to come, and I would feel grateful if I was allowed to know even the difference between a Siamese cat and a Pekinese spaniel. I have only to enter the lounge of any hotel in Europe to be buttonholed by somebody who has taken pity on my apparent innocence and is determined not to allow me to go away from the place without having seen the correct sights.

So I was not surprised when Liebig made it clear that he with his nineteen years' experience of the secret-service considered my presence in Athens as an accredited emissary from G.H.Q. nothing less than a joke. At the time I may have been slightly piqued by what seemed mere professional jealousy. Fifteen years afterwards I can appreciate the joke better.

"However," said Liebig graciously, "anything you want to know in reason about my work, I'll tell you, provided of

ABSURDITIES OF SECRET-SERVICE

course you don't ask for my sources of information. I haven't given away any of my sources of information for nineteen years, and I'm not going to start now." He turned to the plump man at the typewriter. "Tucker, anything Captain Mackenzie wants to know in reason, well, you can tell him in reason; but mind, if I hear that anybody's been tapping my sources of information, there's going to be a hell of a row, and V knows as well as I do what a hell of a row there'll be. Only yesterday he asked me where I got that information about those sixty thousand rifles buried in different places among the islands, and I said to him: 'Look here, V, I've had nineteen years of this business, and you don't think I'm going to start putting down in black and white how I found out all about those rifles?' If it's of any interest to our folk that there are sixty thousand rifles hidden round the *Ægean*, let them bloody well go and dig them up; but don't let me hear any more talk of how and when and why I know about these rifles. I've told V where they are, and I've told him what it's going to cost to get hold of them. If they don't want them, they can tell me so, and let me get on with the hundred and one other jobs I've got on hand."

"Well," said I quickly, "I think Deedes would be interested to hear about these rifles. If you let me have the details I'll discuss the business with him when I go back to G.H.Q."

"Tucker can give you the results of our investigations up to date. And now I've got an important appointment, Mackenzie. So I'm afraid I must leave you. Tucker will explain anything you want to know—within reason, of course."

Liebig, who was putting on his coat as he spoke, pulled out a slip of paper from one of the pockets.

"Can you make anything of that?" he asked.

I read, written with pencil in a sprawling untidy hand on a dirty scrap of paper, the following:

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

The minerals of Mounichia cannot be explored because the wild boar brings itching to the body. Have met and talked with the commander. Compliments.

Mary the Virgin.

I readily admitted that I could make nothing at all of it.

"No, I thought you wouldn't," said Liebig. "But I can."

"And what is it all about?" I asked.

"Sources of information, my boy, sources of information. But you'll get the advantage of them, or rather G.H.Q. will. Not that they'll do anything with the information when they get it. They never do. If you ever live long enough to have nineteen years' experience of this kind of work, you'll realize that what you've been working for all those years was to accumulate enough paper for some damned fellow sitting in an office to give an impression that he had done enough work to deserve promotion. But I mustn't waste any more time gossiping with you, Mackenzie," Liebig wound up, and putting his hat on he hurried toward the door, by which he paused for a moment to fix the second-in-command with those dark bilious eyes of his.

"Tucker," he said, "if You Know Who calls here at the time we arranged, tell him I'll see him You Know Where at seven sharp."

"All right, Major."

When the front door of the Pension Merlin had safely slammed behind his chief, Tucker lit a cigarette and sank down exhausted into an armchair.

"He's quite a nice fellow really, Liebig," he sighed. "But between him and V it's beginning to get on my nerves."

I asked if he was any good at his job.

"Well, I think he'd be very good in Malta," said Tucker. "And which is where he's done most of his work. But he

made a mistake by using Maltese agents here. They're always quarrelling with the others. Well, the fact is he doesn't know this part of the world, and between you and I old Max doesn't really give him a chance."

"Old Max? Who's he?"

"Oh, that's what Liebig calls Major —. He's V for military information, but Max for contre-espionage."

I took an immediate liking to Tucker. There is often an inclination among thin men to find spiritual comfort in the society of fat men. The classic instance is the companionship of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza. Charles Tucker was the best tempered man I have met in my life, and he had for a fat man an immense amount of energy. His father had had a sanitary engineer's business in Constantinople, and he was at the present time a refugee in Athens with the rest of the family, of which Charles was the eldest son. Although Tucker spoke Turkish, Greek, and French as fluently as he spoke English, there was nothing in his exterior to suggest the Levantine Englishman. He was typically the genial Cockney business man with a comfortable home at Ealing and a pride in his chrysanthemums. His cheeks were as pink as the eglantine, his full fair moustache was Saxon to the last hair. I have called him fat; but though there was not an angle in his body he was not really more than plump. His main object in life was to feel that things were going smoothly and easily. His chief accomplishment was driving horses. His defects sprang from the qualities that made him such a good companion. He was apt to be too pliant and too supple. A downright 'no' would have saved him and me many a difficult moment. We shall see Tucker on so many queer occasions during the next two years that he will be able to reveal his personality in action without too much preliminary analysis. At the present moment, good-natured creature though he was, the strain of being at the beck and call of Liebig and V simultaneously

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

was beginning to overwhelm him. I divined that beneath that large moustache a baby's lips were inclined to droop in a pathetic appeal to be rescued by me. V had been relying a good deal on Tucker to recruit among the refugees agents for dispatch into Turkey, and he still regarded Tucker as merely lent to Liebig for the work of contre-espionage. Tucker's *nom de guerre* in the organization was Mr. George Baden, which had been shortened to B.

"It's B this and B that," Tucker complained that afternoon, "till I don't know whether I'm standing on my head or my heels. Well, in fact it's chronic."

I did not know Tucker well enough yet to suggest that, so gently rotund was his form, others beside himself might sometimes wonder whether he was standing on his head or on his heels.

"What do you think V took into his head to do to me last month with the blessed thermometer at well over a hundred in the shade?"

"I can't guess."

"Why, he got into his head that the Huns were shadowing the Refugees' Office, and I was sent a note forbidding me to show my nose in Academy Street. Well, I was rather pleased, to tell the truth; but the very next day I got a note to say I was to meet V at four o'clock sharp by the fourth tombstone in the second alley to the right off the main alley through the cemetery. You know where the cemetery? Well, it's the hottest place in Athens. I got there at four o'clock, sweating like crumbs and waited by the blessed fourth tombstone. No sign of V anywhere. I hung about for an hour till there was a crowd of kids all round me waiting to see if I was going to dig a grave, and it wasn't till half-past five I saw V coming along, staring straight in front of him with those big smoked goggles of his and carrying that silver-mounted malacca cane. I was just going to speak to him when he growled at me through

his teeth without turning his head to left or right. 'Follow ten paces behind me for another hundred paces without appearing to recognize me.'

"So V and I marched along, one behind another, and about a dozen kids chattering after us. After we'd walked the hundred paces V swung round, and still without looking at me muttered: 'Follow me another hundred paces back, and then fifty paces to the left.' 'Look here, Major V,' I began. 'Don't speak to me! Don't speak to me,' he just absolutely hissed at me. Well, after we'd walked round that blessed cemetery, one behind the other, for about a quarter of an hour, V suddenly called out: 'Hullo, Baden, I didn't see it was you.' And then he started shaking hands with me as if I'd been dropped down in front of him out of a balloon. 'Look here, Major,' I said, for I was beginning to feel a little ratty what with hanging about all that time in the heat and the chattering of those blessed kids, 'I've been in this blessed cemetery since four o'clock,' I said. 'What are you thinking of, calling me Major?' V spluttered. He was choking with nervousness and eyeing the kids all round us through his goggles as if they were a lot of budding Hindenburgs. 'I'm astonished you shouldn't have learnt a little caution by this time, Baden.' And with that he came close up to me and whispered in my ear: 'You don't think there's anybody hiding behind any of these tombstones, do you?'"

As Tucker told me this, there came to my mind Tenniel's picture of Humpty-Dumpty leaning over to be whispered to in *Alice Through the Looking Glass*.

"'Well,' I said, 'you chose the cemetery.' 'I know I did, Baden, I know I did. And I think I've chosen wrong. So follow after me without saying any more till we get to the entrance, and I'll take the right hand turning and you'll take the left, and then we'll meet again as if by accident.' 'But if you turn to the right and I turn to the left we shan't

meet at all,' I told him. 'Don't start arguing with me here,' V began to splutter again. 'Can't you see we're collecting a regular crowd round us?' And with this he shot off, glaring in front of him through his goggles. The kids couldn't make up their minds whether to follow him or me at first, but in the end half of them followed V and the other half stuck to me."

"And did you meet V again?" I asked.

"Not that afternoon," said Tucker. "But I got a note the next day to call at Academy Street the same as usual."

Further talk about V's eccentric lines of communication was interrupted by the sly opening of the door, and the entrance of a most unpleasant-looking individual, a tall tallowy creature dressed in the extreme of Mediterranean dandyism, with crimped hair, thick lips, cod's eyes, and a long narrow head.

"Oh, is that you, Byron?" said Tucker. "The Major's just gone out. Have you any news for us?"

The visitor nervously moistened with a cigarette-stained tongue his thick red lips and looked furtively round at the door and the window.

"You needn't be afraid, Byron," said Tucker. "You're among friends here."

The conversation was in French, and the creature who was known as Byron said in a tinny Levantine accent that he would rather tell what he had to tell to Monsieur Liebig only.

"How are you getting on with our friend the Baron?" Tucker asked cheerily, at which the new-comer, turning his cod's eyes on me, gulped with dismay. Then muttering that he would call again later in the evening he squirmed toward the door, where he stopped to ask if it would be convenient for Monsieur Tucker to let him have one hundred francs on account. Tucker could never help being expansive when it was a question of paying out money.

He at once took the key from his pocket and unlocked the door of a safe standing in a corner of the room.

"Sign a receipt for it, please," he said in an important and businesslike tone of voice, and when that tallowy libel on a great poet sat down to sign his name with an elaborate calligraphy I noticed that the nails of his little fingers had been allowed to grow a full inch and were trimmed to loathsome points.

"What disgusting finger-nails!" I commented when the creature had gone.

"Oh, they often grow the little finger-nail long out here. It's a sign to show they've never done any manual labour."

The finger-nails of the creature called Byron haunt me to this day. He was employed by me for a short time, and I am still uncomfortably aware of him leaning over my shoulder and pointing out the juicier bits of his information. I used to feel physically sick, and would have to rise from the table to avoid hearing the scrape of those genteel talons over the paper.

"Liebig thinks a good deal of that blighter," said Tucker. "He's working in Baron Schenck's office. Personally I think he's rather a swine, and I don't believe his information is any good."

"It's possible, isn't it," I suggested, "that Schenck is employing him to find out something about us?"

"Well, if he is," said Tucker, "God help him!"

"Why? What machinery have you for dealing with treacherous agents?"

"Oh, I wasn't thinking of Byron, I was thinking of poor old Schenck. God help *him*, if all he gets out of Byron is what Byron can tell him about Liebig. Look here, Captain Mackenzie, I tell you without a joke and speaking absolutely straight as between ourselves, this show as it's run at present isn't worth paying twopence to find out about. It's getting more and more difficult to get suitable fellows for

Turkey, and when we do get them in they're finding it more and more difficult to get any information out. And if the Bulgarians come in against us, as I've no doubt they will, it's going to be more difficult than ever. In fact the only man who's likely to get anything then is Heathcote-Smith at Mytilene. Still, I don't want to crab the A side of the show except that I don't want to have anything more to do with it. Well, I can't get the men away any more, and V blames me. You'd think to hear him I wasn't trying." Beneath the heavy blond moustache one felt that baby lips were beginning to droop again, and there was a perceptible break in Tucker's light tenor. "There's another thing," he continued, "V promised to get me a commission, and every time I remind him about this blessed commission he puts me off and says he thinks it'll hamper my freedom. Well, now, Captain Mackenzie, it's all very fine, but a fellow doesn't like people to think he's just loafing about in Athens instead of joining up. It's not of course as if I could wear the uniform here and do anything with it. Still, it would be a satisfaction for me afterwards to be able to say I *had* held a commission, and it would shut people's mouths if they started asking me what I was doing amusing myself in Athens during the war. The last time I spoke to V about it, I told him straight I'd rather take the first boat home and enlist if I was going to hang about here the way I'm doing now."

I promised Tucker that I would urge his claims strongly to V, and suggested that if objections were raised to giving him the executive curl he might be granted at any rate an assistant-paymastership in the R.N.V.R.

"Well, I wish you would, Captain Mackenzie," said Tucker. "I assure you it would put new heart in me. But to come back to what I was saying about this show. It isn't that I want to crab old Liebig, but he really doesn't understand this place. He's taken a house now in the

middle of a big stretch of waste ground right up the Patissia road, and every blessed time he makes an appointment to meet a friend there he think it's too far for him to go and sends me instead. I'm sick of being sent trapesing over there at two in the morning every other day, and when I get there finding as often as not the friend hasn't turned up. Now, if you had the B side of this show, I reckon we could build up a nice little organization and do a bit of good. As things are now we're just a blooming laughing-stock. What I say is either do things thoroughly or don't do them at all."

Armed with a number of facts about the working of the B side of Intelligence work in Athens I went round later in the afternoon to see V himself, and give him my impressions.

"What you tell me, my dear fellow," said V, eyeing me solemnly across the desk through his great horn-rimmed spectacles, "coincides exactly with what I have been telling myself about Liebig. He is a good fellow. C considers him one of the smartest men he has, but Athens is *not* the right place for him. Still, I don't think I can do anything at present. I must wait at any rate until I know if you will be free to devote your attention to this business of contre-espionage, which will of course become more and more important as time goes on. But I shall write to C and suggest that Liebig, who is a thoroughly good fellow, might perhaps be . . . however, we can do nothing until we hear definitely about your future."

I now brought up the question of Tucker's commission ; but V shook his head.

"I *don't* like the idea of a commissioned officer doing the work here that B is doing. It might involve us with the Greek Government, and the last thing we want, when the political situation is as delicate and uncertain as it is now, is to involve ourselves unnecessarily with the authorities. I think, if you don't mind, I would rather not press for a

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

commission for B till the situation clears. Later on, perhaps, I'll see what can be done. But for the present I should be very much obliged if you would discourage the notion. B is a good fellow, but he is very indiscreet, and nearly involved me in a most awkward business at the cemetery the other day. He actually sprang up from behind a tombstone, shouting: 'Good afternoon, Major,' at the top of his voice. No, I really don't think he ought to have a commission. At any rate, not just at present."

For the next five or six weeks V tried to think of some way by which he could eliminate Liebig from Athens without hurting his feelings. Then in the middle of October he sent for me to go round and see him at his office. When I was seated at the other side of his desk, V, his whole frame seeming to strain and quiver with the weight of his responsibility, pulled out a small drawer and took from it some small pieces of paper which he pushed across to me.

"That is all I have had in from Liebig during the last week," he said.

I read through some scrappy notes, too vague to be of the least use to anybody. They were mere scraps of gossip about obscure individuals in Athens, with no indication about the trustworthiness of the source and no suggestion that any steps were being taken to probe the information more fully. On the last sheet of paper, however, I read:

Dear Max,

I was in my hiding place before the meeting started, but when I saw pistols on the table I dare not move round and my cold prevented me from hearing better. . . . Then followed a fantastic description of various members of the German Legation who were alleged to have been present at this gathering, with scraps of absurd conversation. The account finished thus:

I do not propose to give any particulars about the place of

ABSURDITIES OF SECRET-SERVICE

meeting as I propose to go there again, and this is a risky business, but I am morally convinced that these people have Englishmen in their employ. If you give me a free hand I shall round them up or get blotted out. Please note I do not speak from ear-say (sic.) I was present at this meeting although I was behind the door and I am convinced they are getting information straight from Englishmen.

"L" October 13th, 1915.

I put the paper down and looked at V.

"It sounds like a cheap film," I said.

"You think it's all quite imaginary?" he asked.

"Just a lie," I said.

"Well, I don't like to think that Liebig is deliberately inventing," said V. "I don't like to think that about anybody," he repeated earnestly. "But I am bound to agree with you, Z, that this does not ring true. Still, I cannot do anything in a hurry. However, I shall certainly write to C this week and suggest that, if he has any job in view for which the abilities of a man like Liebig might be usefully employed, I might be able to spare him. But of course I couldn't possibly insist. You will appreciate that, I am sure. And it wouldn't do for Liebig to think that I wanted to get rid of him. There is nothing more dangerous in a job like ours than to let a man who holds a position like Liebig think you want to get rid of him. I am sure you will understand that, Z, and carry on for the present along your own lines, keeping me in touch with what you are doing and not interfering, of course, in any way with what Liebig is doing."

I had hoped, when V showed me those ridiculous scraps of sensational information, that at last he intended to take some definite steps about Liebig, who was by now using his agents more to find out what I was doing in Athens than what the enemy was doing.

"I suppose you realize what he means by these Englishmen in the employ of the Germans?" I asked.

"I have told him to give me further particulars," said V. "If you look, my dear fellow, you'll see that I've underlined that bit about Englishmen in blue pencil and written 'further particulars required.'"

"Well, he's obviously suggesting that Tucker and I are working with the other side."

"Oh no, I think you're exaggerating."

I saw that it was no use arguing, and went away from Academy Street rather depressed. There were moments when V's charity was exasperating. However, the very next day I had a message to say that he wanted to see me urgently, and when I arrived I found him in a state of indignant agitation. He was so indignant that he forgot to refer to Liebig by his *nom de guerre*.

"Good god," he exclaimed, "what do you think — has just told me? He has actually been in here and told me that he has made arrangements to have a man assassinated because he had given him some bad information. Good god, such a man isn't safe! Imagine what will happen here in a minute if Liebig goes about arranging to have people assassinated. I never heard anything like it in all my experience. He must go at once. I've sent a telegram to C to say that I am sending him to Salonica on a matter of urgent importance, and I'm writing C by this mail to ask him to find a post for him away from the Mediterranean altogether. Of course, I shan't tell C anything about this appalling project of Liebig's to go about having people assassinated like this. He will understand I shouldn't send him to Salonica and ask to have him recalled from there without strong reasons for doing so."

Liebig's announcement of his method for disposing of treacherous agents really did drive V into action. Four days later he said 'good-bye' to me before setting out for Salonica.

"I shan't be there long," he told me, "I've asked to rejoin my regiment. I'm sick of the secret-service. I've not had nineteen years of it, Mackenzie, to be told by an old woman like Max of the same rank as myself that I've got to run it like a curate. 'Is this war?' I asked Max. 'Or is it a blessed mothers' meeting?'"

"I think you rather upset poor Max by telling him you were going to have that fellow put out of the way."

"Well, what else did he expect me to do with him?" Liebig asked indignantly. "Good lord, my dear man, when you've had nineteen years of the secret-service *you* will realize that there is only one answer to some swine, and that is a knife between the ribs. Well, I'm not sorry to leave Athens. It's too quiet for me here."

Liebig vanished from Athens, and after a week in Salonica he rejoined his regiment. As far as I remember, he was later on given a contre-espionage job in Malta, which no doubt he ran most capably. He left behind him a few incomplete dossiers and scraps of gossip about suspected individuals. He also left behind him Byron, who by no means relished the obvious incredulity of Tucker and myself compared with what must have seemed to him the pre-Adamite trustfulness of Liebig. Had the latter remained in Salonica, Byron was to have joined him there. I soon grew tired of paying out money to such a worthless rascal and was on the point of sacking him, when he told me that Baron Schenck had made him a definite offer to do espionage for him in Egypt and suggested that I should give him the opportunity of swindling his employer. The slimy brute evidently hoped to secure for himself a comfortable existence for the rest of the war at the expense of Schenck and myself, and the mobilization of the Greek Army made Alexandria sound a safer and pleasanter abode than Athens, although he was technically a Russian subject. I

decided to be quit of Byron for good and all, and at the same time spoil his chance of ever being employed again by the other side. So I arranged with Cauchi . . . with Cauchi? But of course, nothing has been said yet about Cauchi.

Cauchi had arrived in Athens a few days after I came out of the clinic. The first news I heard of him was when V sent for me to say that C was sending out from London a man who he hoped would be just the right person to employ on contre-espionage work in Athens. His father had been a Maltese who had married a Salonica Jewess. He was said to speak a dozen languages and to have done a good deal of detective work in America.

"This sounds a most invaluable fellow," said my Chief, goggling down at Cauchi's testimonial spread before him on the desk. "The only thing is, I do wish he wasn't a Maltese. I *don't* like the idea of employing two Maltese at once in Athens."

While V was saying this, I was thinking of the ribald old puzzle of trying to make a Maltese cross with five matches, the solution of which, since this book is not written by a conscientious pacifist, I do not feel at liberty to print.

"I think, if you don't mind, Z," my Chief went on, "I'll put him directly under you at once and not tell Liebig anything about his being sent out, because I really do not like the idea of two Maltese engaged in the same city. In a job like ours we simply must not neglect any precaution. I don't want to interfere in the least with your control over Cauchi. He is under your orders, my dear fellow. Absolutely under your orders. Still, I would suggest that for the present at any rate and until something definite is settled about Liebig's future Cauchi should remain down at the Piræus. You must think out some suitable occupation for him, which will conceal what he is really doing and . . .

by the way, what are we going to call him ? We can't call him C of course."

I should have taken advantage of that note of reverence in V's voice, when he alluded to the Chief of the secret-service, to find out just exactly who C was and the constitution of his organization. He might have had scruples about telling me, because by this time the work he was doing had begun to prey so much on V's nerves that a direct question like that might have shocked him into incoherence. Yet if he had told me then exactly what was the position of the C organization in regard to the Foreign Office, the Admiralty, and the War Office he and I might have been spared many misunderstandings later on and much departmental strife might have been avoided. However, the petty pride of etiquette kept me from asking any questions about C, and V's self-hypnotism by the abracadabra of the secret-service had reached such a point that he could no longer be simply frank about anything.

"We'll call Cauchi Clarence," said I, for that was the first name beginning with C which came into my head, and it would perplex one of those charlatans who pretend to discover in word-association an infallible guide to a human being's state of mind to extract any theory about mine from my choice of Clarence on the spur of the moment.

The next operation was one of those in which V revelled. With shaking hands he drew from an envelope a torn piece of paper.

"You will identify Cauchi with that when he arrives. He will have the piece of paper which matches it, if," said V goggling, "if he really is the man we are expecting."

That anybody who had once seen Cauchi should ever have supposed that his unique appearance could be assumed even by the greatest impersonator imaginable was ridiculous, and it seems incredible to me now that, when I met him in a squalid Piræus hotel on that hot September

afternoon, I did not shout with laughter as we solemnly matched our pieces of paper. Yet so much was I under the enchantment of the kind of mystery that appealed so deeply to V that I actually kept my piece of paper as a precious souvenir of life as it is really lived in the secret-service, and it lies before me as I write these words, in shape similar to the half of one of Weldon's paper patterns for a Peter Pan collar.

I found the new agent in a bedroom at the top of a fly-blown little hotel. A great oval figure rose from the bed when I entered and crossed the floor with a heavy sliding motion to greet me. We matched the pieces of paper. Then he offered me a hot damp hand, and I heard for the first time that richly larded polyglot voice, saw those big dark animal's eyes gazing into mine, saw that immense hooked nose, that sleek bulk and luculent hair, and smelt that mixture of perspiration and musk. If I was under the sway of the mysterious enchantments of the secret-service, Cauchi was absolutely drugged by them. Owing to the fact that he had arrived early that morning and that he had gone straight to his hotel, where he had remained locked in his bedroom all day, the bedroom itself being close under the roof had by the time I called on him in the afternoon achieved a frowsty heat which would have made a Lascar stoker blink. In the hot room at a Turkish bath one may see stout bald-headed old buffers oozing away with nothing to cover them but a small towel. In a similar temperature Cauchi was wearing a thick blue serge suit, a khaki flannel shirt, and no doubt heavy woollen underclothing beneath. By the time I reached him there were two dark stains of perspiration even on his coat, and his trousers were clinging to his legs like the draperies of a Royal Academy nymph.

"For god's sake open the window," I gasped.

Cauchi looked at me severely from those great dark animal's eyes.

"I don't think we ought to open the window," he said in that voice, which to call unctuous is to libel with an easy epithet. Anybody who has watched a cook skimming the fat from a richly bubbling stockpot and shaking it from the spoon into a bowl will have a faint idea of the kind of way the voice of Cauchi seemed to be dipped out of his inside and flung away like a piece of superfluous fat.

"But why not open a window?" I murmured.

"If you take the responsibility, Captain," said Cauchi. "I'll open the window. But if we're overheard I'll accept no responsibility."

"We'll risk it," I decided, looking out at an expanse of brazen sky above the huddled roofs.

The entering air seemed to fill Cauchi with sudden energy, for he dived under the bed and displayed an enormous and strangely nodulous behind of blue serge. Presently he emerged with a sack.

"Any chance of wearing these?" he asked.

I looked at the sack in bewilderment.

"It's my sergeant's uniform. It's the old uniform I was wearing when I got a Hun's bayonet through my arm at La Bassée."

He rolled up his sleeve and showed a long livid scar on the forearm.

"That's why I'm here now," he told me solemnly. "Colonel French* saw me when I came out of hospital and told me to stand by for work which required courage of a high order."

Cauchi pulled a pompous and complacent cork with his tongue at this point to express as modestly as he could that he had been compelled to reveal to Colonel French the extent of his valour.

"Courage of a high order," he repeated, "and an ability to keep his mouth shut."

* Col. C. N. French, C.M.G., C.B.E.

Here Cauchi protruded a large tongue across which he slowly drew a thick and grubby forefinger.

"Is that what you did to Colonel French?" I asked.

"They might cut my tongue out, Captain," he explained without a twinkle of humour in those sombre eyes, "but they wouldn't get a word out of me. Courage of a high order and an ability to keep his mouth shut," he repeated in the heavy monotone of a testimonial to himself which he had learnt by heart. "And fluency in languages," he continued. "So I told him I could speak French, German, Turkish, Arabic, Italian, Spanish and Greek the same as I could speak English. Besides a good smattering and able to get along in Dutch and Norwegian, and say chin-chin and suchlike in Serbian, Bulgarian, Russian and Roumanian. So he sent me round to see Captain Spencer in Whitehall Court, and Captain Spencer told me to report out here to the bearer of a piece of paper which would fit a piece he had given me. You know Captain Spencer, of course?"

"Very well," I declared, though I had not the slightest idea who he was. "And you went to Whitehall Court?" I pressed.

In a few minutes I had learnt from Cauchi what I had never ventured to ask V, which was that the headquarters of the secret-service were in the two top flats of 2, Whitehall Court, not quite inappropriately just above the Authors' Club. I suspected that Captain Spencer was C himself, but it was to be some time yet before I found out any more about that mysterious figure. Still, I had been able to extract enough about Whitehall Court from this new secret agent to leave me doubtful of that ability to keep his mouth shut which had recommended him to Colonel French. Unaware of his indiscretion, Cauchi himself was gazing like a regretful mooncalf at the sack containing his sergeant's uniform.

ABSURDITIES OF SECRET-SERVICE

"I'd like to have had a chance of wearing the old rags once again," he sighed. "When a fellow's faced death like what I have in an old kit, he doesn't want to forget all about it. So I brought my old khaki pals out here with me. They won't hurt anybody underneath my bed, and who knows? There may be a chance of wearing them out here sometime. Well, here goes with them for the present."

The owner of the uniform wiped an oily tear from the corner of his eye and dived under the bed again. This time I discovered that what I had taken for bony excrescences were actually pistols he was carrying in his hip pockets.

"I see you're armed."

Cauchi emerged from beneath the bed at this with the expression of a bear who has been offered a bun.

"I've been followed all the way from London," he announced portentously. "I say nothing. I don't accuse nobody at Whitehall Court. But I have my own thoughts. And from what I can make out the Huns knew I was being sent out here. That won't keep me from doing my duty, Captain. A chap doesn't need to be at La Bassée to die for his country."

"Well," I told him, "you'd better leave the pistols with the uniform for the present. You must remember we are working here in a neutral capital, and that it might be embarrassing if the local police chose to make themselves unpleasant. Major V would be extremely annoyed if he heard you were carrying pistols about with you."

Cauchi shook his head pessimistically. To take his mind off the danger he was evidently fancying for his own future I told him that his work at present would not involve him in the slightest risk. Should we have occasion to send him on a dangerous secret mission, that would be a different matter.

"For the present all you have to do is to keep your eyes

open and report to me anything of interest that comes your way during the day. For the present you'd better have as your apparent object for being here business as a commercial traveller. What business experience have you ? ”

I now found out that Cauchi had a couple of brothers in Salonica who were shipping agents, and that Cauchi himself after being educated in a commercial school at Zurich had been employed as a supercargo. That being the case, it would be idle for him to masquerade round the Piræus, since sooner or later he would inevitably be recognized by somebody.

“ The best thing you can do,” I told him, “ is to be perfectly frank about yourself. You can apparently be on the look out for business for your brothers. Write out your reports as clearly as possible, date them carefully, but do not sign them with your own name. You can call yourself Clarence. The reports should be put into a sealed envelope and left for Mr. George Baden at this address.”

I gave him the address of a house which Tucker used for correspondence.

“ Did you say I was to sign them Clarence ? ” he asked, smacking his lips in approval of the name chosen. “ C-L-A-R-E-N-S ? ”

I corrected his spelling, and he produced from his pocket a large pencil, the tip of which he licked with a slow relish as a buffalo might lick salt. After this he solemnly inscribed his *nom de guerre* in a note-book.

“ Is that O.K. ? ” he inquired, showing me ‘ Clarence ’ written down in a large clear angular upright hand.

At my nod he replaced the note-book and the pencil in his pocket, accompanying the action with a click of the tongue like a cork being pulled from nothing smaller than a jeroboam of champagne.

A day or two after this Tucker, who was already beginning to feel elated at the prospect of being released from the

ABSURDITIES OF SECRET-SERVICE

double tyranny of Liebig and V, and who in moments of elation always became even more expansive than usual, announced to me that he had set Clarence up at the Piræus in a greengrocer's shop. Tucker was beaming with such enthusiasm at the ingenuity of the camouflage he had designed for the new agent that I hardly had the heart to observe that Clarence would have as much chance of being taken for a cauliflower as for a greengrocer.

"Ah, but the beauty of it is, Captain Z, that his shop is exactly opposite the German Consulate. That was my idea."

"But if I were the German Consul, Tucker, and I saw Clarence selling lettuces to the inhabitants of the Piræus just outside my front door I should ask for the protection of a gun-boat."

"Now, don't worry, Captain Z," Tucker begged with one of those emotional gestures by which he would sometimes reveal the Levantine conservatory in which his heart of oak had grown too lush. "You'll see everything will be quite all right."

Some days after this while I was sitting over a cup of coffee in the Panhellenion, one of the big cafés by Omonia Square, I noticed a stir among the idlers in that centre of Athenian life. Looking up to see what was exciting their curiosity, I beheld Clarence standing in the main entrance and rolling his eyes at every table in turn, his arms folded grimly.

"*Regarde, Marguerite,*" a French girl at the next table exclaimed to her companion. "*Voilà le grand policier anglais dont je t'ai parlé hier. On dit qu'il est merveilleux. Quel type! Il va dépister tous ces sales espions boches. J'en suis très contente.*"

On my taking the first opportunity to remonstrate with Clarence for such idiotic affichage of himself he made a Mediterranean gesture of despair.

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

"I can't help it, Skipper," he told me. "There's something about me which frightens them. Wherever I go I hear 'em whispering that I'm the big detective who's been sent out here to clean up the Huns. It's not my fault. I told you I was being shadowed all the way from London. Skipper," he concluded, gazing passionately into my eyes, "there's a leak in the show, and you ought to know about it."

I gave up. There was no longer any object in pretending that Clarence was not connected with Intelligence work, though I decided that in spite of his absurdity he could still earn his salary. Indeed, by this time I had realized that in a city of the size of Athens it would be impossible to achieve secrecy by the usual means of keeping oneself hidden or pretending to be something one was not. Such methods in Athens would be the methods of the ostrich who thinks himself hidden when he buries his own head. I made up my mind to create a focus of publicity, and under cover of that publicity hope to achieve a measure of secrecy. Only that afternoon I had met at tea Captain Staichos, a son-in-law of General Dousmanis, and himself a prominent member of the General Staff. And Captain Staichos had asked me if our people in Academy Street had not recently been finding it much more difficult to get any reliable information out of Turkey.

"Our people in Academy Street?" I repeated.

"Yes, yes," he replied with a smile. "The Refugees Commission."

So much for V's hope of concealing the reason for his presence in Athens by putting his office opposite the offices of the Greek General Staff.

To come back to the plan for getting rid of Byron and rendering him innocuous. The house off the Patissia Road which Liebig had taken was unsuitable as a rendezvous for secret meetings, because it could only be ap-

ABSURDITIES OF SECRET-SERVICE

proached by half made roads over a large expanse of wasteland, in the middle of which Liebig's house stood like a lonely hen-coop. The result was that anybody turning aside from the traffic of Patissia Road was more than usually noticeable as he picked his way across the rubbish and rubble and waded through the thick dust toward the house. One advantage in choosing a lonely and isolated position as a rendezvous for agents is that, though it may be difficult to reach it unobserved, it is equally difficult for the other side to shadow the inmates without exposing their interest. A rendezvous in a busy street is much easier to reach unobserved; but it is difficult to be sure that it is not compromised, because it is also easier for the other side to watch. In a city like London secret meetings can be arranged with impunity; but in a city like Athens, the population of which in 1915 was not much over two hundred thousand, the problem of avoiding the vigilance of the enemy was almost insoluble. There was a scarcity of motor vehicles, so that one had to drive in tumbledown hackney carriages of the victoria type, and since no Athenian horse seemed capable of going up the slightest incline except at a snail's pace, it was fairly easy for anybody on foot to follow even a carriage. There were always the trams of course; but nothing is easier than to follow a man in a tram. So long as the lease of Liebig's house was on our hands, we made the best of it by letting Clarence use it, and we were satisfied that his conspiratorial figure lumbering across that wasteland as cautiously as one of the great pachyderms toward its drinking-hole occupied the attention of at least half a dozen of the Greek secret police every day, while it infected them with the notion that we were even more stupid than they had thought we were. It was certainly an ideal house in which to play the little comedy we had staged for Byron. As a preliminary I borrowed from V the services of his stenographer, whose real

name I shall suppress, but who was a prim little clerk, not even yet habituated to the effect of the war on the routine of workaday existence. He had, I think, been employed by some business firm in Constantinople; but Constantinople had had no more influence over his imagination than the White City upon a clerk in Shepherd's Bush. His conception of work was something which was begun at a regular hour in the morning, and which finished at the same hour every afternoon.

"Now, Mr. Jones," I said, "what I want you to do this evening is to take down in shorthand the conversation which you will hear going on between me and an agent whom I suspect of trying to betray us."

I looked a little anxiously at Jones, for I could not detect the slightest response in his eye to what I had supposed might be a welcome relief from typing out the presumed whereabouts of Turkish regiments.

"I see," he murmured coldly. "Will you be very long?"

"I don't know how long we shall be."

Jones looked injured.

"Major — said you would not require me after half-past eleven, or at latest twelve."

"I'm afraid I can't say just how long I shall want you, Mr. Jones; but as we cannot start till ten o'clock, I may have to keep you a bit later than that. Anyway, I think you'll find it rather interesting work."

Jones made no comment.

"I shall ask my questions in English," I went on. "Then Tucker will translate them into Greek, and translate the agent's replies to my questions. So I think you'll have plenty of time to get the English questions and answers down correctly. The only trouble is that of course you'll have to be hidden."

"Hidden?" Jones repeated in accents of depressed astonishment.

"Why, yes," I told him enthusiastically, "for naturally the agent mustn't have the slightest idea that everything he says is being committed to paper."

"I see," said Jones doubtfully. "But with regard to this hiding, what steps precisely are you proposing to take?"

"Well, we shall have to manage something at the house. So perhaps if you could get down there at half-past nine instead of ten, that would give us more time."

"By half-past nine?" Jones repeated as doubtfully as ever.

"You've nothing else to do to-night?" I asked.

"No, I've not exactly got anything to do," Jones admitted. "But Major — very seldom keeps me at the office after seven o'clock, and my wife is accustomed to me being in of an evening. She's inclined to be a little nervous."

"Then I'm very much obliged to you for your help."

"I couldn't very well refuse Major — when he made such a favour of it," Jones responded discouragingly.

"Still, I think you'll enjoy the evening," I insisted.

But Jones said nothing, and there was no glimmer of response in his eyes to suggest that he shared my optimism.

Clarence had been entrusted with the duty of escorting Byron to his doom, and I had no doubt that by the time the great detective had led him through the dust and rubbish of that waste ground Byron would be feeling that he was in the grip of the Inquisition itself.

When I reached the house, which was a jerry-built two-storied affair of six rooms, I found Tucker in the parlour beaming genially at a table on which were set half-a-dozen bottles of whisky and about two dozen bottles of soda-water.

"What on earth . . ." I began.

"It's quite all right, Captain Z. My idea is that we are all meeting here for a jolly evening."

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

"Well, it looks as if we were meeting for a wake or a wedding, and I should think by the time Byron arrives with Clarence he'll feel pretty sure it's for a wake, and his own at that. Has Jones arrived yet, because we've got to settle where he's to be hidden?"

"I've arranged that," said Tucker, obliterating all difficulties with a sweep of one plump hand across the other as if Jones's hiding-place were a mere gnat. "I've got the very place for him. At first I was going to rig up a screen, but I thought that might make Byron suspicious. So what about this?"

He indicated, with the air of a hospitable landlord ushering in a guest, a cupboard under the stairs that led up to the first storey.

"I fetched down a mattress from one of the bedrooms," Tucker continued, "and it'll be lovely and comfortable in there. We'll leave the door on the jar so that he can see what's going on."

"But Byron may see him."

"Ah, but I've arranged it so that he'll sit right at the far end of the cupboard."

"Won't it be rather stuffy?" I objected. "The stairs will be right down on top of his head. A miserable position for a shorthand writer to take down a conversation which may last a couple of hours."

"Well, I've given him a mattress," said Tucker. "He could lie down on his stomach if he liked."

Presently Jones himself arrived, and not all Tucker's *bulbul* blandishments could induce him to agree that his hiding-place was such a treat as Tucker tried to persuade him it was.

"Well, have a whisky, old man," he was invited.

Jones declined austere, and we packed him away into his cupboard with plenty of paper and a dozen well-sharpened pencils to wait for Byron.

ABSURDITIES OF SECRET-SERVICE

Tucker and I had been chatting for about ten minutes when we heard the muffled voice of Jones in protest.

"Look here, is there any need to shut this cupboard door? Because it's exceedingly hot in here, I may say."

"Sorry, old boy," said Tucker, "I didn't realize I'd shut the door on you. But keep well back, won't you. Because if our man spots you as he comes in he'll suspect something."

At this moment an elaborate tone-poem of rings and knocks proclaimed the arrival of Clarence. Tucker opened the door cautiously for the tallowy Byron to ooze his way round and stand blinking at the light, a sickly expression on his face, his pointed crocodile-leather boots grey with dust.

"Go on in, Byron," Clarence urged, with the voice and expression of an executioner inviting a victim to lay his head upon the block. "There's nothing to be afraid of, boy."

The agent looked nervously round and licked his dry thick lips. The walk with Clarence across the waste ground had evidently reduced him to a condition nearing collapse, and I suggested a whisky and soda to pull him together. Tucker in distinction to the sombre and portentous gloom of Clarence was inclined to exaggerate the joviality of the occasion, and could not pour out a bottle of soda without flinging the empty bottle across the room to mark, I presumed, the careless bohemianism of the occasion. Byron was by this time seated at the table, now sipping a strong whisky and soda, now with a brilliantly coloured handkerchief he had produced from his cuff dabbing at his forehead, which was like wet clay. I began to apprehend the terror which had played upon his guilty imagination when Clarence took me aside to ask in a hoarse whisper if he might take out drinks to his assistants.

"Your assistants? What assistants?"

"They're friends of mine, Captain Z. I'm not charging

them up on my weekly expenses ; but you wanted Byron brought here without fail, and it wasn't for me to take any risk of him escaping. So I asked two friends of mine to follow us ten paces in the rear. I took every precaution. Both of them had handkerchiefs tied round their faces."

"I wish you'd do what I tell you," I exclaimed irritably. "And not add idiotic trimmings of your own."

"It was volunteer work, Skipper," Clarence assured me. "I said I had a dangerous job before me to-night, and those two boys offered to come and see me through with it. You wanted Byron brought here. Right." He shrugged his shoulders till they wobbled like a camel's hump. "'The Skipper wants Byron,' that's what I said to myself. And I've brought the B. If he'd shot me between here and the Patissia Road, how could I have been sure of getting him here as you wanted? That's the way I put it to myself. You give the orders, Skipper. I carry them out. That's Clarence."

He stood there, bowed by the spectacle of his own devotion.

"If you employ any unauthorized people to help you on a job in future, I shall have you sent back to London."

"Those are hard words, Skipper, for anyone who's doing his best."

"Tell those fellows outside to clear off at once," I interrupted.

Shaking his head at the extent of my capacity for misjudging his motives Clarence moved in ponderous dejection to the door, opened it quickly, shouted into the darkness a few words of Greek, and slammed it to as if he were dodging a hail of bullets from without.

It took all Tucker's bonhomie to restore Byron's nerve after what must have been a terrifying walk across that waste ground with Clarence's masked myrmidons dogging his heels. Indeed, it was past eleven o'clock before I was

able to begin the probing of Byron's good faith, and it was nearly three o'clock before I had finished with him. If all that time Jones had been doing his duty in the cupboard under the stairs, I knew that I should have a complete exposure of Byron, a record of lies, assertions, and contradictions which would demonstrate him unanswerably to be the worthless creature I had supposed him. He had drunk a good deal of whisky to sustain himself through the ordeal, and the last sight I had of Byron was squirming unsteadily out of the house, whence presumably he squirmed his way back into the Patissia Road, for there was no sign of him when we followed half an hour later.

I have seldom seen anybody so obviously the victim of acute discomfort as Jones when he emerged stiffly from that cupboard where he had been huddling for over four hours, with nothing to vary the monotony of taking down the questions and answers except an occasional blow from a soda-water bottle.

"You hit me rather hard once," he said to Tucker with a good deal of bitterness in his tone.

"I'm awfully sorry, old man," said Tucker cheerfully, "but I was afraid that swine Byron might think you were in there taking down what he was saying. So I thought I'd put him off by chucking the bottles into the cupboard as if it was just any old place. But of course I never thought any of them would hit you at all hard."

Next day V sent for me, and I knew by the extra courtliness of his manner that he was worried over something.

"I say, Z, do you mind managing without Jones in future? He came to me this morning and asked if he might go back home and join up, and when I asked him why he said he'd rather be in the trenches than go through again what he went through last night. And he is such a very good clerk that I don't want to lose him. I'm sure you'll see my point of view. His wife got very anxious about him

too, because he didn't get home till after four o'clock this morning, and she was afraid he'd been murdered by the Germans. And tell me, Z, in confidence, was Tucker quite sober last night? Because he seems to have struck poor Jones on the head with a soda-water bottle."

I told V the whole story. It would have amused him more if he had not been still feeling a little nervous that Jones would insist on being sent home, for Jones was an admirable and extremely accurate stenographer. In spite of his discomfort, and in spite of the shower of empty soda-water bottles from Tucker he had produced a most remarkable replica of the scene with Byron, a copy of which I sent with my compliments to Baron Schenck. I never found out what ultimately became of the slimy rascal; but he was certainly never employed again by the other side.

"Thank you very much, Mr. Jones," I said enthusiastically. "This is really a splendid piece of work."

"I think there's one answer there I haven't got quite right," he said, pointing to the script.

"Perhaps that was when Tucker hit you with the bottle," I suggested.

"Perhaps it was," said Jones without a smile.

CHAPTER VI

PERSONALITIES AND POLITICS

ALTHOUGH I was already meditating hard upon the problem of giving some kind of effective and significant form to the contre-espionage side of V's Bureau, several weeks were to elapse before the absurd scene described in the last chapter.

When I came out of the clinic I was still without any official appointment to a real job in Athens, beyond an authorization to collect and collate and send on to the Intelligence at G.H.Q. Kephala, the results of Liebig's somewhat erratic investigations. It is true that Clarence had been put at my disposal early in September; but I could only with extreme discretion make use of his services and those of the one or two other agents I could afford to employ out of the funds that Deedes was to allow me every month. So I took advantage of my comparative freedom from responsibility to see as much as I could of Athenian life. I was anxious to arrive at a point of view of my own about the real state of opinion in Greece, for such political reports as we were given at G.H.Q. had been so far removed from the first impression I had formed of the true condition of affairs that I was anxious to offer Sir Ian Hamilton a more accurate indication of the probable trend of Greek opinion and action than he had seemed to possess. There was too during that first week of September, 1915, a whisper of great events pending. George Lloyd at the end of August had visited Athens and after seeing Venizelos had been working for hours on a report of the situation. He had sent

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

a message to the clinic that he had no time to look in and see me.* Italy had declared war on Turkey at last. On August 23rd Venizelos had taken his rightful place as head of the Government to which the nation had elected him. Rumour declared that we had at last made up our minds to stop regarding operations on this front as a side-show. New French and British Divisions were already on their way. King Constantine was reported to be seriously thinking at last of disowning Germany. Lloyd George or Carson was to become Prime Minister, both of whom were in favour of making this front the critical point of the Allied line. There was to be an offensive in France which would keep the Germans quiet while heavy reinforcements were moving as fast as possible out here. Tucker and I were discussing the way we would run a contre-espionage show in Constantinople.

Brief were these dreams.

'O, *Hallelujah*,' Sir Ian Hamilton wrote gratefully in his diary on September 2nd, when, after waking from a nightmare in which a ghostly hand had seized him by the throat and held him down beneath the surging waters of the Hellespont, he heard from Lord Kitchener that the French were sending three or four Divisions immediately to work along the Asiatic mainland of the Straits. And

* For a long time I used to wonder if at this interview with M. Venizelos the landing of Allied troops at Salonica had been arranged over the heads of the Military as a political move. The way in which Lord Grey used to insist that he had invited the Allied troops to Salonica, and the obvious distress that such public statements caused M. Venizelos, made me suspicious. I knew that Sir Francis Elliot had had no inkling of the proposed landing and therefore that unless M. Venizelos had somehow communicated with the Authorities at home over Sir Francis's head he could not have invited the landing. That interview with George Lloyd, however, remained awkwardly in my memory and sapped my belief in the honour of M. Venizelos. Finally in 1921 I wrote to George Lloyd who was then Governor of Bombay and asked him point blank whether or not the Salonica landing had been discussed between him and M. Venizelos when he visited Athens in 1915. He wrote that no word of the landing was said and that the visit was connected with Sir Valentine Chirol's last-minute effort to bring in Bulgaria.

PERSONALITIES AND POLITICS

'Ichabod!' he wrote on September 14th, when he heard from Lord Kitchener that the dispatch of these reinforcements would depend on the success of the forthcoming offensive in the West.

However, before I could give my mind to the problem of Greek politics during that cheerful first week of September I had to solve the problem of my own clothes. I hesitate to dwell upon this topic, because an account in *Gallipoli Memories* of my difficulties over uniform and an allusion to my having contrived to sleep in silk pyjamas, even on active service, were assumed by several critics to imply an intolerable levity of demeanour in the middle of a great war. I need hardly say that American critics were particularly severe on the pyjamas. Although the mulberry and the fig are so closely related, the old Adam of puritanism has always looked askance at the silkworm. D. H. Lawrence who displayed in his attitude a typical development of puritanism had this horror of silk. He came to see me once in Capri when I was ill and stood louring by the bed without saying a word.

"What is the matter, Lawrence?" I asked. "You look annoyed about something."

"It's those damned silk pyjamas you're wearing," he replied. "I hate them. I hate damned frippery like that."

"Well, I hate your grey flannel shirts, Lawrence," I assured him as earnestly as I knew how, because it would not have done for me to smile at this moment.

"And I ought to hate you for wearing them," Lawrence continued.

"Yes, and I ought to hate you, Lawrence, for wearing those grey flannel shirts. But I don't, because I think they express the essential puritan which is in you."

"Perhaps it is," he admitted in that high dreamy tone of voice, the charm of which was indescribable. "You're right, I think. You know, I used to be a local preacher once."

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

Readers more contemptuous of externals than I was fifteen years ago must try of their charity to excuse my dismay at having nothing to wear but a reach-me-down cream-coloured suit of a material something like poplin when my friend Eddie Keeling arrived in Athens from Imbros and told me that Princess Nicholas had commanded him to take me to tea with her in Cephissia. There seemed to me something absolutely irreconcilable between having tea with the Grand Duchess Helen and that suit I had actually seen hanging up in the shop before I had bought it. But Keeling was firm. Her Imperial Highness had expressed a clear desire to make my acquaintance, and go I should. So I went, feeling as timorous and not nearly so well dressed as the White Rabbit on his way to the party of another Duchess. I need not have worried, for indeed the grace, the charm, and the beauty of that great lady would have made the folds of a more awkward suit than mine unnoticeable.

"And so you are going to Nish, Keeling," she said. "But do you think the Austrians and Germans will let you stay there long?"

"I hope not, Ma'am," Keeling replied. "I hear it's unspeakably loathsome there."

And as I recall that room in the Cephissia villa where the sunlight was tempered by great pine-trees, and civilization seemed to have expressed an ultimate perfection of type in the great lady who was our hostess, I fancy that what she and Keeling were saying to one another are words that I am putting into the mouths of figures on a Minoan fresco. I can hardly believe that they are not both sitting there now and that they will not be sitting there for ever.

Yet I know that only a day or two later Keeling was off to take up his post at the Legation in Nish. That was the week when we were all in a mood of extreme optimism, for he was followed by a number of huge trunks which were

PERSONALITIES AND POLITICS

filled with what he considered the indispensable minimum for an endurable existence in the temporary capital of Serbia. His last behest to me was to be sure and see that a pair of riding-breeches I was to get cleaned for him in Athens were sent on promptly. Then he went northward to encipher some of those telegrams for help from Serbia, and then to suffer the ordeal of the Serbian retreat as escort of the British nurses. I did not hear from him until the following May, and cannot resist quoting from his letter :

I wrote you a delightful chatty letter dated January 30 which after being read by every military post officer in the Near East was returned to me to-day, open, with remarks such as 'not known at Anzac,' 'not a member of the R.A.M.C.' 'Signalling Dept. have no knowledge of this officer, try Veterinary Section,' etc. I now hear from Erskine that you are still at Athens. After unspeakable horrors in Serbia, Montenegro and Albania I am now happily established here, and can offer you a room if you ever come to Rome.

My breeches you kindly had cleaned arrived just before the Bulgars, and were much admired by the 150 virgins whom I conducted intact across the mountain passes of Montenegro and Albania.

Besides presenting me to Princess Nicholas, Keeling, before he left Athens, took me to the Italian Legation to call upon the Contessa Bosdari, the wife of the Minister.

It might be possible for the friends of the Marchesa Casati to claim that she was the most remarkable feminine personality in Europe during the decade between 1910 and 1920, and it must be admitted that she did touch the sublime heights of eccentricity, an inspired moment on the peak of which Augustus John has recorded in paint. Who then living on Capri can forget her landing to take possession of San Michele which she had rented from Dr. Axel Munthe ? Who but the Marchesa would have arrived at the

Grande Marina late at night with nothing but a negro servant and a blue parrot? And who but she would ever have employed a negro servant whose appetite was at once so delicate and so voracious that he must eat two whole chickens every day? Dr. Munthe should have added a chapter about that tenancy to his delightful *Story of San Michele*. Still, those who were privileged to enjoy the friendship of the Contessa Bosdari would maintain her claim to be considered a not less remarkable personality and as capable of scaling the heights of sublime eccentricity as the Marchesa herself.

At this period the Contessa made a habit of receiving visitors between half-past two and half-past three, when she always wore evening dress. On this afternoon her costume was of pale lavender satin sewn thickly with glass bugles, which gave her the look of a figure from the frame of a rococo Venetian mirror. It was her habit to assume each year a regular *maquillage*, the feature of which in 1915 was two brilliant splashes of crimson rouge on the points of her cheekbones. The following year her *maquillage* was a dead white, and I remember once sitting in her box at the Athens Opera House, the audience of which always gave the same effect of unmanageable provincial wealth as the audience of the Metropolitan Opera House in New York, and thinking how she with her huge black-plumed hat and pale face and long ivory cigarette holder and mundane serenity created an illusion of La Scala.

She was excessively thin, but too lithe and graceful for such an epithet. Her ankles were of a fineness quite incredible, and to see her fanning herself in a high-backed chair and pointing her foot to the floor was to be granted the effect of watching some ballerina perform a miracle of exquisite poise. There must have been a dozen men in her darkened *salon* on the afternoon when Keeling took me to call upon her for the first time. I only remember two of

them—Prince Ghika, a Roumanian of immense wealth, and the handsome and dashing ‘Tanty’ Rodocanachi. The conversation was political, and the Contessa was evidently bored with politics that afternoon, for she sat back in her chair, pointing her toes on the floor and occasionally interrupting the political discussion to ask some question about novels in her deep voice. Finally, she dismissed us all; and I remember walking back to the hotel with Rodocanachi, who was explaining all the way what a mess our diplomats were making of Greece. At that date I still clung to the superstition that there might be reasons of major necessity which compelled the Foreign Office to appear incapable of doing the right thing in the Balkans. I suggested that if we knew the whole facts of the European situation we might be able to understand better the difficulties which beset our diplomacy out here. But Rodocanachi would not hear of this for an excuse, and after Gallipoli how was it possible to maintain that there existed any constructive statesmanship in England?

It was an intellectual relief, after contemplating the apparent inability of anybody at home to know what he wanted and set about getting it, to come into contact with the *sacro egoismo* of Italy in the person of her Minister to the Court of Greece. Count Bosdari was in his way as remarkable a personality as his wife. He did not resemble the popular notion of a diplomat, least of all an Italian diplomat. He was a man of distinguished ugliness with a clipped black beard and a harsh voice, and his manner was that of a grumpy professor who could not suffer fools and who desired to discourage most of the people he met from supposing even for a moment that he could. His training had been in the school of San Giuliano, which meant he believed that his country should never have entered the war. Not that he was a pro-German, unless a profound distrust of democracy was to be a pro-German. His

spiritual home was England, and I think he felt that England by not remaining neutral had committed as signal an error of political judgment as his own country. He had been Secretary of Embassy in London, and his gruff voice comes clearly back to me from the other side of the big table at which he used to work on the top floor of the Italian Legation in Athens.

"I am hoping that, when this mad war is over, I shall perhaps be given London. That is my great desire. I would be very happy to be Ambassador in London. Of all things in my career perhaps I regard with most pleasure my time in England. You have in your country a possibility to lead the most civilized existence in Europe. And that life of Oxford and Cambridge. I am always thinking of my visits, and hoping that perhaps one day I shall be able to make them again."

I had been accustomed to hearing foreigners sigh for the wonderful country house life of England and wish for the war to come to an end so that they might return to it. The prospect of perhaps losing that country house life of England undoubtedly distressed King Constantine when he saw that his policy was beginning to alienate English public opinion. He seldom failed to allude to the time after the war, and of his longing to see England again; and he would use that as an argument to convince the soldier or wandering diplomat to whom he was granting an audience how wrong it was to misjudge his attitude. He was completely sincere. Indeed, the tragedy of the Greek situation was that very sincerity of all concerned. I remember feeling, as Count Bosdari expressed his nostalgia for dinners at High Table and the conversation of Senior Common Rooms, that it would never be satisfied, even though in fancy I would be sitting with him under an elm rising solitary from the level green of a college lawn. I divined that we should never sit thus in reality, neither thus nor in the heart of

PERSONALITIES AND POLITICS

Italy, beneath some Horatian pine consecrated to Diana. I suppose that coming political events had already cast their shadow upon my growing friendship with Bosdari, which was to be severed ultimately by irreconcilable differences of opinion. And after Athens instead of the London he desired he was to be given of all cities most inimical to his taste, Buenos Aires. From Buenos Aires he went to Berlin, which owing to a disagreement with Signor Mussolini was his last post. So for him as for so many others the lucid air of Greece darkened to a tragic twilight.

In the early part of the time I spent in Athens before it became an *idée fixe* of mine that it was essential for the future of Great Britain's Eastern responsibilities to take the lead in supporting Venizelos it was pleasant and easy to indulge in academic discussions of foreign policy with Bosdari, though even then I felt that his dislike and distrust of Venizelos were due more to his Italian fear of a powerful Greece and his aristocratic dread of a triumphant Greek democracy than to the cool judgment of a scholarly observer.

"I cannot understand," I told him once, "why you are so convinced that a strong Greece is necessarily going to threaten the position of Italy. Of course, I admit we may lose the war altogether and revert to the pre-war state of affairs, with Austria still the dominating factor in Balkan issues and the Hamburg to Bagdad railway *verboden* to the rest of Europe, though that seems most improbable. But how in the case of victory, if Italy take the place of Austria as a Mediterranean power, is she going to achieve both a weak Serbia and a weak Greece? And even if Italy does achieve her object and secure both, how will she prevent France from building up a counterbalance of power by means of Roumania and Poland, and possibly even a revived state of Bohemia?"

But Bosdari would not admit that his dislike and distrust

of Venizelos had anything to do with his dread of Panhellenism.

"It is not because I am afraid of a strong Greece, that I think it mad to count on Venizelos," he insisted. "I object to so much importance being attached to Venizelos, because I do not believe that Venizelos has anything like the influence attributed to him, especially by your people. The King's attitude justly represents the attitude of the Greeks toward the war. They do not want to fight, and the notion that they are only being kept from fighting by the King is imbecile. Go round Athens, and you will hardly find anybody who does not trust the King's estimate of the situation better than he trusts that of Venizelos."

"Oh, I admit that in Old Greece the instinct is to hold on as tightly as possible to what was gained as a result of the last Balkan war; but the feeling in New Greece is very different. The Greeks of the Asia Minor Islands cannot feel uninterested in what may happen in Asia Minor after the war. The future of Smyrna must be in their minds, not to mention the future of Constantinople. If the boundaries of Greece were what they were before the last Balkan war, I should certainly think that Greece was better out of the present business; but for them to expect to be able to hold on to Salonica without fighting for it is to put all their money on the defeat of the Entente, because if the Entente wins, Serbia will want Salonica, and Italy will be bound to agree to Serbia's having Salonica in order to keep Serbia out of the Adriatic, and there you are with a weakened Greece but a strengthened Serbia. How is that going to benefit Italy, with the Russians in possession of Constantinople, the Serbians in possession of Salonica, and the French with Smyrna, which they will demand as the price of your keeping the Dodecanese. I would not be too sure that you will be allowed to develop even Adalia, for I gather from some of my Tory friends like George Lloyd

that Italian ambitions in Southern Asia Minor are already being looked at askance."

"Yes, yes," said Bosdari, "but this is all idle talk. The point of immediate importance is that if the Greeks come in to fight with us they will be more trouble than they are worth. Let them alone to clear out Venizelos in their own way, which they will certainly do."

"You are so confident after what has happened at the Dardanelles that we can re-establish ourselves on this front without Greek help?"

"Indeed I am not at all confident, my friend. It is quite certain that within a few weeks Bulgaria will join with Germany, and the future is by no means pleasant to contemplate. But it is quite certain that a few wretched Greeks will not influence that unpleasant future one way or the other."

That future was not becoming more pleasant to contemplate. The Germans were reported to be concentrating in force at Breslau with a view to obliterating Serbia. There were persistent rumours of a tremendous attack about to be launched against Egypt. The news from France and Italy was not encouraging. Bulgaria was evidently on the verge of entering the war upon the side of the Central Powers. The position of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force during the winter began to look like becoming untenable. The Germans were driving back the Russians all along the line, and the fall of Petrograd was already being talked of.

At a time so fit for pessimism as this the arrival of Captain Lancelot Lowther in Athens exercised a sedative effect upon the agitated mind. It was incredible that Lancelot Lowther could belong to a nation in danger of defeat. He was enjoying that crowded hour of glorious life the war had brought him. He cast over the cosmopolitan racket of the Hotel d'Angleterre the serenity of rural England. To watch him smoking a large cigar in the lobby and looking so extremely like the photographs of his brother Lord Lons-

dale at Newmarket was to be granted a kind of assurance that the war really would come to an end one day and that England definitely would be herself again. At dinner that night he asked whether I had noticed he was a little deaf, and explained that it was due to the noise of the guns in France. The War Office messengers at this time travelled between Whitehall and Athens via G.H.Q. in France and Rome. At first they had all gone on to G.H.Q. Gallipoli ; but there had been a fuss over the amount of gossip they took back, and it was only now that they were again being allowed to go on from Athens to Imbros, whither Lowther was bound that week-end. Soon after making this remark about his deafness he asked me if I had noticed the way he continually kept looking under the table, and explained that the habit had crept over him since he had been carrying official bags.

"Always looking down to see if those confounded bags are safe. They're a deuce of a responsibility."

The next time I was to see Lowther was in Taranto a little more than a year later when he alone of the survivors of the *Arabia* was as spick and span as if he had arrived from Bond Street instead of a torpedoed P. and O. liner. Not only was he perfectly dressed, but he was smoking a cigar as usual.

"As soon as the torpedo struck us," he said, "I asked the Captain how long we had before we sank. He told me that he thought I could count on five minutes. So I went down to my cabin and dressed myself properly, packed my cigars with both my suit-cases, and slid down the side of the ship into the last boat just as she was turning over."

And when I looked at the other survivors in every oddity of attire, among whom Lancelot Lowther was strolling around without showing a sign of shipwreck, an assurance that the war really would come to an end one day and that England definitely would be herself again was renewed.

CHAPTER VII

ONE SEPTEMBER DAY

THAT fortnight after I left the clinic was a kaleidoscope of which I cannot reconstruct the shifting patterns, so that nothing remains of it in my memory but a jumbled heap of brightly tinted bits of glass. The few scrappy letters I wrote home about this time reflecting as they did the confusion of my own mind, the confusion of these new surroundings, and the confusion of the political situation are often, now that I re-read them, more of a hindrance than a help to a clear narrative. I long to reproduce with the shapeliness the passage of years should have given it, the effect of that crowd of new faces and new impressions ; but it swims across my memory with a dreamy inconsequence that exasperates my love of correct dates and accurate order. Yet by the help of one letter and two or three engagements noted down in a pocket-book I can squeeze from the past the incidents of one day, which will serve as typical. This was Thursday the ninth of September.

It began with a cup of black Turkish coffee at nine o'clock, after which I sat down to work by the window of my bedroom in the Hotel d'Angleterre. It would have been impossible for anybody not to waste a few minutes in looking out across the roofs of Athens to where upon the Acropolis the columns of the Parthenon rode light as clouds upon the air of the morning, and no doubt I duly wasted them before I applied myself to the problem of those sixty thousand rifles said by one Armenian to have been hidden

by another Armenian among the islands of the Ægean archipelago. I laugh aloud now to think that at this date I was still innocent enough to suppose that my own natural sight would uncover the truth. The notion that I once fancied myself capable of piercing the secret of an Armenian is so comic that but for my notes on this case which still exist in a pocket-book, pages of them written in an illegible shorthand, I should not credit my fatuous self-confidence. Then there was the case of L 20 who would have been in our list the twentieth questionable individual, one of whose many aliases would have begun with L. I find in the same pocket-book an excerpt from an agent's report of his activities which had evidently amused me: *'His grandfather was called Aaron or Aronachi. He was a "hecabaz" (a low-class juggler) and through women-trade and other filthy works he got into great intimacy with a certain Pasha and one day during a severe illness of this one he stole his seal and managed to make false documents and bills so that when the Pasha he died Aaron became owner of good properties and makes a fortunate family.'* There were pages more about L 20, but these have been burnt and I only remember now that we had a good case against him, that we secured his arrest on some Greek ship, that he was carrying four passports, and that he spent a long time of seclusion at Malta.

No doubt on that September morning in 1915 I was gloating over the papers of L 20 as a schoolboy might gloat over a rare bird's-egg or postage stamp. He was one of our best specimens. Tucker, the kindest of creatures, was already contemplating with enthusiastic ferocity the collection of enough evidence against L 20 to have him shot. Meanwhile, it was my job this morning to put his biography down for inclusion in Graves's Newgate Calendar, for I was going back to G.H.Q. in three days' time and Graves was panting after my list as the hart after cooling streams

There were a couple of hundred more names for that list which I must get in order and it was difficult to work in this hotel room. Anybody who has tried to write in the bedroom of an hotel will know the ingenuity with which hotel furnishers always manage to provide tables adapted for any other pursuit except writing. The particular table which had been dug out in response to my appeal for a place to write at was afflicted with an incurable palsy, and I was almost afraid to shake a recalcitrant fountain-pen lest the added weight of one blot of ink should cause it to collapse altogether.

Presently, Joseph, my valet, came in. There may seem as Dr. Johnson would have said, something wild in keeping a valet to look after one cream-coloured suit of a material like poplin, six khaki shirts of a material like nothing else on earth, a pair of white linen trousers which some kind friend had volunteered to lend me when he heard I lacked cool clothing, but which owing to the reduction of my figure by illness were of no more use to me than a large laundry bag, a blue flannel coat which I could only wear out of doors, owing to a bottle of hair-wash's having got broken over it, and my khaki uniform. But the employment of Joseph as a valet was inspired less by his ability to look after clothes than by having somebody at hand for messages. Considering that Joseph had spent the whole of his life until now as a waiter he looked after clothes rather well, though he did retain a tendency to fold my shirts like napkins. At first I fancied that Joseph, who by the way was another Maltese, was so much steeped in the romance of being attached in a minor confidential capacity to the secret-service that the exaggerated caution of his movements even in crossing a room was his expression of it. Presently, however, I discovered that it was flat feet and not romance which caused that cat-on-hot-bricks gait. Apart from these flat feet which betrayed that he had spent his life either as a police-

man or a waiter, the external appearance of Joseph was all that one could desire from a secret messenger disguised as a valet. He had a fierce, upcurling black moustache, an olive skin, and flashing dark eyes. Indeed, except for those flat feet he would not have let the picture down if painted in attendance behind the chair of a Borgia. In private life Joseph was a devoted husband and father, and when he ceased to be useful as a pseudo-valet he was employed as one of the janitors of the great passport bureau which was one day to evolve from the absurdities of the present organization. When Joseph first entered our service I would receive on an average two anonymous letters a week denouncing him as a traitor ; but I was able to satisfy myself of his integrity and devotion and discover that the denunciations came from rivals who wanted his job. He spoke English well enough ; but he was more comfortable with Italian, and that was the language in which we communicated with one another.

That morning I sent Joseph off as soon as he arrived to fetch Tucker's daily budget and bring back some answers to various questions, and while he was away I managed to put on my ready made suit without his help. When my valet came back, however, an hour later I had for him a task likely to puzzle even his ingenuity. I had already been invited to dinner that night with Admiral Cardale, who was acting Chief of the British Naval Mission during Admiral Mark Kerr's absence on sick leave, and I had excused myself in advance for not going in evening dress ; but now there arrived from Contessa Bosdari an invitation to her reception at the Italian Legation for the new French Minister, M. Guillemin, at which Royalty was to be present.

"Joseph," I asked him. "Where, when, and how can I possibly get hold of some dress clothes for to-night ?"

"*Signor capitano*," Joseph replied without a moment's hesitation. "I have a suit you can wear."

ONE SEPTEMBER DAY

Joseph's suit lacked the finer contours which are alleged to reveal the cunning scissors of Conduit Street or Savile Row and, when I tried it on that morning, it looked definitely green in the fierce Athenian sunlight.

"*Non abbia paura, signor capitano*, have no fear," Joseph urged. "By night it will be completely black. *È uno smoking molto bello, molto fino.*"

I could not quite bring myself to agree with Joseph about its beauty and refinement, but it certainly was a 'smoking', and I knew that it would be much easier to carry off a badly cut dinner-jacket than a badly cut tail-coat. Although otherwise lean, Joseph had developed probably owing to the slowness of his movements, a premature spread; but by buttoning up the jacket I should be able to hide the amplitude of the waistcoat. There was no difficulty about buying a shirt and collar of course, and with a glossy pair of new patent-leather shoes I should look when dressed like somebody who had at last inherited an old dress-suit from his father. I made up my mind to try the effect of it first on the Cardales' dinner-party. I would observe if people stammered and looked embarrassed when I was introduced to them, and I could count on friendly criticism from various members of the Mission. The problem of my attire settled, I worked on till one o'clock, and then went down to lunch with the Cuninghames. The only thing I remember about the occasion was that somebody was present, perhaps a Greek officer, of whom I was asking the correct pronunciation of various classic names in modern Greek.

"And how do you pronounce the three great tragic writers, Euripides, Sophocles, and . . . ?" For the life of me I could not recollect for a moment who was the third. "And the other great poet?" I said impatiently.

Nobody at the table could immediately supply the name which had ridiculously slipped my memory.

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

"But you all know his name as well as you know your own. Oh, who is it?"

And suddenly Petros the dear old waiter who used to serve at our table took advantage of leaning over to offer me some dish to croak hoarsely in my ear: "Aeschylus."

"Yes, yes, Aeschylus!"

And I can still see the broad grin of benign complacency which wreathed that genial old face as Petros retired to fetch the next course. How many waiters in England could supply the name of a tragic poet lost to a guest in a moment of aberration, and how many if they could would?

It was after lunch that I saw standing in the entrance lobby of the hotel a youth wearing a white fustanella (or kilt) of a material like tarlatan, white tights gartered with red below the knee, upcurving shoes of red leather with big black pompons on the toes, a zouave jacket of blue cloth braided and lined with red, and a red round cap with a long tassel of black silk. Beside him stood a child of about eight, who reproduced over again in miniature from tassel to pompon the young man. With slim wrists, girl's waist, long shapely legs, a face and profile which might have made Praxiteles stare at their perfection, a complexion like a tea-rose, and a natural grace of movement and attitude which made him perpetually decorative, he was to the average Athenian as the Parthenon to the average Athenian house. The porter told me that he was a young Evzone from the Epirus who had just come back from doing his military service, and who having been a hall boy at the hotel before he went away was now asking to be taken on again in order to support a widowed mother and keep the little brother who was standing beside him. The Evzones are the Highlanders of Greece and like our Highlanders wear a modification of their national dress as uniform. Evzone literally means well girdled or well waisted, and it takes a good figure to carry off that dress.

ONE SEPTEMBER DAY

"Perhaps you could find him a place?" the hall porter suggested. "He is a very good boy, very quick and intelligent without any fear at all of anybody or anything."

"Why doesn't the hotel engage him again?" I asked.

"Oh, it is impossible. When he was here before, he was getting so many tips from everybody that all the other hotel servants have been jealous, and are now coming to me to say that if I employ him again they will all give notice."

Tucker had for some days been urging me to have what he called a 'minder,' or in other words a perpetual escort to guard me against the machinations of the enemy, and in this V had supported Tucker, for by this time V was getting thoroughly nervous of the way things might develop in Athens, and his own particular bugbear was a dread of being kidnapped by the Turks and tortured to death. Only the previous evening I had strolled across from the table at the Grande Bretagne at which I was dining to the table where V and Waugh, the Commercial Attaché, and two or three others dined together every evening, always in dinner-jackets, in order to pay V back a shilling I had had occasion to borrow from him earlier in the day. V had not noticed my approach, and when I put the shilling into his hand it might have been a piece of molten lead, for he jumped a foot into the air and told me to go away at once and never to do such a thing again in a public place. I had to hurry away from the table as quickly as possible leaving the shilling on the table, which V at once covered with a napkin.

I could not persuade myself that I really did require a 'minder' in spite of Tucker's blood-curdling tales of the way people had to his certain knowledge disappeared mysteriously from Constantinople.

"Ah, it's all very well for you to laugh, Captain Z. But you'd look a bit funny if the Huns got you one night. You don't know this part of the world like I do."

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

"Yes, but suppose they got my 'minder' as well? I should look still funnier. And I don't see why they shouldn't as easily get both as one."

Tucker shook his head.

"You'll remember I warned you one day when it'll be too late," he sighed.

However, though I did not think Stavro (that was the name of the young Evzone) would protect me against my enemies if they chose to be nasty, I did see how he might be of help to develop my policy of secrecy by means of publicity. Nothing could be more conspicuous than to drive about Athens with an Evzone on the box-seat of the carriage, especially when he was in full dress with a jacket of white silk embroidered with silver lace and a large sword and two daggers stuck in his girdle. So Stavro was engaged, and for a month he served his purpose admirably by focusing upon himself public attention. Then the Greek Army was mobilized, and he had to leave to rejoin his regiment. I did not see him again for nearly two years, when he turned up in Syra and was given a job as one of the janitors at our offices. For a week or two he hung about gracefully in that sunny paved courtyard, playing with a Siamese kitten when he was not taking messages or otherwise engaged. But alas, he had deteriorated under the influence of an idle military life, and when he was off duty he took to swaggering about the streets of Syra and pushing people off the pavement. Finally he attacked with the flat of his sword some man who had objected to being pushed into the gutter and had to be sacked and deported to Athens, which seems to illustrate once more what a dangerous gift of the gods is personal beauty.

I worked for an hour after lunch, and then drove out with Lady Cuninghame to a tennis-party given by Prince Demidoff, the Russian Minister, at his villa in Cephissia. Prince Demidoff was a handsome man of considerable

ONE SEPTEMBER DAY

wealth who might just as easily have been one of the Stewards of the Jockey Club as a Muscovite diplomat. He was not by repute much wrapped up in his profession. Although the effect of his attitude was that he regarded the war as a boring interruption to the amenities of existence, I used to divine in conversation with him a malaise at the back of his mind about the future of Russia, to which he gave expression by a lightly cynical manner about the course the war was taking. He was credited with more personal influence over King Constantine than any other Entente Minister, and it was usually he who was called upon to prepare the King by friendly and as it may have often sounded somewhat avuncular advice to receive one of those many Notes that the Allies used to present to the Greek Government. That tennis-party seems in memory as far away as parties years before the war, because within a short time Athens was to be so deeply seared by the struggle between the King and M. Venizelos that such parties became impossible.

The Grand Duchess was playing tennis when we arrived, and after the set was over she talked to me first of all about books and plays in which Prince Nicholas was interested even to the point, as I remember, of writing plays himself. Then she asked me suddenly what I was really doing in Athens.

"Well, Ma'am, there has been some talk of my doing propaganda in the Greek Press."

"That is very much needed," she told me. "But you must not run away with the idea that because many of the people here do not believe in the policy of M. Venizelos they are therefore against us."

I realized that she was speaking now not merely as a Greek Princess, but also as a Russian Grand Duchess, and then gradually, as she expounded the point of view of those who dreaded the effect of Venizelos's influence on Greece,

I began to divine that she was above all speaking as Royalty and expressing the apprehension which was perhaps gnawing at the tranquillity of every Royal family in Europe. A sweeping victory for either side in the war would inevitably sweep away in its course some members of the great European Royal Family. Here in Greece was a family joined by ties of equal strength to England, Russia, and Germany. King Constantine himself was half a Dane and half a Russian, a favourite nephew of Queen Alexandra and the brother-in-law of the German Emperor. Prince George, between whom and Venizelos was the sharpest personal enmity of all, was married to a daughter of Prince Roland Bonaparte, and of the Greek Princes it was he who was closest to France, the chief support of his political and personal enemy. Prince Nicholas was married to the ivory princess by whom I was seated, herself a Romanoff and a first cousin of the Tsar. Prince Andrew was married to an Anglo-German princess, daughter of Prince Louis of Battenberg. Prince Christopher, who at this moment for all his plumpness and slight myopia was playing a most agile game of tennis, was not yet married at all, and in the present turmoil of conflicting national interests was likely to find it difficult to find a wife of the Blood Royal without provoking criticism. That he should ultimately marry a rich American widow would have been at that date beyond belief. Even in England, where if anywhere the Royal Family was safe enough whatever happened in Europe, there had been a change of names. Battenberg was now Mountbatten; Teck had turned to Cambridge; Brunswick-Luneburg and Saxe-Coburg-Gotha had shrunk to Windsor, thus completing the final anglicization of the Elector of Hanover's line. President Wilson had not at this date decided to make the world safe for democracy; but it was already beginning to look extremely unsafe for anything else.

ONE SEPTEMBER DAY

Although, while the Grand Duchess was talking, I had this momentary glimpse of a long glamorous vista of lost causes and perhaps even a positive intimation of the doom that would come upon that Royal family of Greece, with such completeness of fortune's malice as hardly to leave one member of it unscathed, that very revelation made me afraid of surrendering coolness and clearness of vision to what would seem to myself the hot sunset hues of chivalry, to others the romantic snobbery with which they credited people like Mark Kerr.

It was necessary for me to leave the tennis party early that afternoon in order to pay my visit to V in Academy Street, which I reached about half-past six. He was full of kindness and courtesy that day as indeed he always was, but my imprudent behaviour in handing him back that shilling at dinner last night was still on his mind.

"You won't do anything like that again, will you, Z? It is one of the first rules of our work never in any circumstances whatever to pass money in a public place."

"But, V, it was only a shilling. Nobody could possibly have imagined anything odd about that."

"No, but it's the principle of the thing, my dear fellow," said V with gentle reproach in his tone. "And I hope you won't ever do such a thing again."

To change the subject and get V's mind off that shilling I told him of an amusing dream I had had about him the night before.

"I dreamt you had cut your moustache off, V, and when I asked you why, you told me it was in order to disguise yourself."

For the second time in twenty-four hours I saw V leap from his chair.

"Good god," he exclaimed, "what an astonishing thing! Do you know that only this morning on my way down to the office I was thinking to myself that perhaps it

would not be a bad idea if I were to cut off my moustache ? But do you think it really would disguise me at all ? ” he asked anxiously.

I looked at V's dark military moustache and told him that I did not think the loss of it would make people suppose his place in Athens had been taken by another mysterious unknown.

“ Perhaps you're right,” said V, filling his big pipe from the bowl beside him. “ By the way, what do you think of a plan I've been turning over in my mind for getting information out of Turkey when, as seems probable, we are going to find it more and more difficult. I had an idea, I don't know if there's anything in it, of putting messages in air-tight tins and floating them down rivers to be collected by a boat standing in for the purpose. I also wondered if we mightn't manage something rather effective with well-made toy balloons. Think it over and tell me what you feel about the possibilities of such methods of communication. There are objections to both, of course ; but something will have to be done presently to get the information out. And that reminds me, what do you think of these ? ”

He cautiously unlocked a drawer in the side of his desk and showed me six lumps of coal.

“ Coal,” I observed fatuously.

“ Bombs,” V said in a low voice. “ We are going to have a shot to blow up the Kuleli Burgas Bridge. I've taken a great deal of trouble about this. There are coal depots, as perhaps you know, near the bridge, and I obtained through one of our agents some of the actual coal from these dumps. This coal has been copied in London for the cases of these bombs, which can be timed to explode at any time up to a month after setting them. Baden is going to take them down to-night and give them to Rogers on board our boat the *Valkyrie*. I wonder if you'd mind going down to Phaleron to-night with B and letting me know to-morrow

ONE SEPTEMBER DAY

morning that all went off well. B is a capital fellow, but he is apt to be careless and forgetful. I don't want him to leave any of these bombs lying about anywhere."

I told V about the reception at the Italian Legation and suggested driving down with Tucker afterwards.

"Splendid," said V. "That will be a perfect blind. Nobody is likely to be shadowing you there."

I left Academy Street to go back to the hotel and put on Joseph's dress suit before setting out to the Cardales' dinner-party.

Rear-Admiral Cardale was in his present post two steps ahead of his rank at home, and like nearly every other officer with the Mission he was beginning to wonder whether an exalted but temporary rank out here was worth holding at such a time when promotion at home might be slipping past him. At the moment he was in command, and with a rumour that Admiral Mark Kerr on account of his indiscreet advocacy of King Constantine was not going to be allowed to come back to Greece, Cardale was perhaps wondering if he had a chance of retaining the command. He was a genial host and I recall one or two jolly evenings in their rooms from which I cannot clearly detach this particular evening.

I fancy, though, that it was this evening I first met George Leith, who was the outstanding personality among the members of the Naval Mission, and who would indeed have been an outstanding personality in any surroundings. As swarthy as a muleteer and as strong as a gorilla, he was as temperamental as an art student. Some years of service with a gunboat up the Chinese rivers had accentuated a touch of the Tartar in his physiognomy. Association with the peoples of the Far East seems to stamp itself on the European countenance. The Anglo-Indian returns from years of service more obviously and even aggressively British than he was when he left home; but China is too

much for the Aryan, and few escape the stamp of that unimaginable aggregation of human beings. George Leith was a man who feared nothing and nobody ; but since absolute fearlessness usually implies a measure of irresponsibility he let himself in for plenty of criticism. The inaction of naval life out in Greece compared with the opportunities of action elsewhere at such a time was beginning to get on George Leith's nerves. He was growing daily inclined to become more and more quarrelsome. His rank at home would have been Commander, but out here like the rest of his brother officers on the Mission he had a temporary rank a step above his own. In spite of his size and strength, and sometimes overweening manner, his voice was curiously light and staccato, often not unlike the voice of a petulant schoolboy. He was a facile prey to his own emotions, and gave an impression of being positively incapable of the most elementary prudence, so that the danger of his pitching away his own career to gratify a passing whim never seemed far off. Later in the war he did brilliant service in the North Sea, with a destroyer leader ; but at this date he was in a mood of profound pessimism about his naval future and in the resultant exasperation doing all that he could by his behaviour to imperil it. When I look back at him, he stands out from his colleagues as a rich portrait by Franz Hals would stand out on the line at an exhibition of the Royal Academy. There were many stories of George Leith of which I will record one. He had recently gone aboard one of our cruisers lying in an Ægean harbour and demanded medicine from the surgeon.

"What medicine ?" he was asked.

"What medicine ?" repeated Leith indignantly. "Why a box of starters and a bottle of stoppers. What other medicine should I want ?"

There could have been no greater contrast to George

Leith than the other Commander attached to the Mission. Captain Wells was the ideal instructor and intensely aware of the delicacy of his position at such a time. There were some who called his refusal to supply any information about the Greek Navy too scrupulous. My own feeling was that, if a man believed he had no right to take advantage of his opportunities and pass on his knowledge, he was completely justified. Moreover, Wells had a genuine sympathy for the difficulties of the Greeks, and the correctness of his attitude was not inspired, as some suggested, by his fondness for that correct society which was almost to an individual in sympathy with the King's policy. I look back now and ask myself how any of us in Athens ever did manage to reach a definite opinion about what was best to be done immediately, let alone what was to be done ultimately. Had the British Government been illuminated by even the glimmering of a notion of what it wanted in the Balkans that notion could have been carried out. Those who felt themselves unable to be of service in trying to further a policy with which they could not agree could have asked to be transferred elsewhere. As it was, the British Foreign Office led the hand to mouth existence of a street conjurer, producing out of a battered old Whitehall top hat Thrace, Cyprus, Macedonia, and badly cut chunks of Asia Minor to earn the pennies of a sceptical Balkan audience. We in Athens came each of us by his own road to his own policy and, finding that there was no policy at home, each of us tried to carry out his own. At the same time, whatever blame may rest on the Foreign Office the improvisation of the Salonica landing was entirely the fault of the military authorities, who surrendered just as weakly to the French point of view over that as later on the Foreign Office seemed to surrender to the Quai d'Orsay. I fancied when I set out to write down these memories that I had achieved the necessary detachment; but from the past rises the old

exasperation, and such a pleasant occasion as a dinner with the Cardales, such an impeccable figure as Captain Wells, can set the mind racing round again as much like an impotent squirrel in a cage as it seemed when racing round fifteen years ago.

It is time to go on from dinner to the reception given at the Italian Legation to M. Guillemin, the new French Minister, who probably never suspected that night into what a bed of nettles he had been dropped. Poor M. Guillemin ! He was almost the only diplomat in Athens of whom I never heard anybody say a good word. He irritated King Constantine whom he lectured and scolded with less suavity than a bilious professor. He irritated Sir Francis Elliot, because he would stand on the steps of the British Legation and shout at him secrets of Allied diplomacy. He irritated Count Bosdari to such an extent that Count Bosdari would sometimes glare and almost snarl at him with the expression of a cornered mandrill. And he irritated the members of his own Legation not a whit less than he irritated the members of every other. Perhaps the reason why he was sent to Greece at all was the way he must have irritated everybody at the Quai D'Orsay before he arrived, so that with sardonic French humour they had decided to send him to the most difficult diplomatic post in Europe. Fortunately for M. Guillemin he was bubbling over with too much self-esteem ever to observe any lack of esteem in others. Yet he was a kindly creature, the victim of a tiresome voice which like the peacock he was too vain to realize. I can see M. Guillemin now standing on the steps of the British Legation in a frock coat much too large for him and shouting away to his *cher collègue*, the British Minister, who, lean and grey, would be eyeing him rather in the way a heron might eye a stranded salmon.

Most of the members of the Entente and Neutral Legations were at the Bosdari reception that night. Colonel

Braquet, the French Military Attaché, was there, a dapper little man with a pointed nose which was presently going to be put out of joint by the new French Naval Attaché, Comte de Roquefeuil, who however had not arrived in Athens by this date. Colonel Goudim Lefcovitch, the Russian Military Attaché, was there, a fair slim man married to an English wife, a state which gave him a particular interest in England, but had not yet succeeded in teaching him to understand a great deal about his wife's country.

"What is England doing?" he would always ask me when we met. "What *is* England doing?"

Goudim had a notion that for some ulterior purpose Britannia was refusing to put forth her strength and get the war over. Not that this worried him for more than a moment, for he was always bubbling over with good spirits and prancing about as restlessly as a harlequin. Just now he was in disgrace like a mischievous schoolboy, because he had suddenly embarked on secret-service work and tried to buy one of the employees at the post-office to hand him over the telegrams of the enemy Legations. The whole business had been a childish prank and would have had no importance at all if it had not given King Constantine an opportunity to deliver a damaging *tu quoque* when complaints were made to him about the espionage which was being conducted in his capital by the Legations of the Central Powers. After his *gaffe* over the telegrams Goudim went in for amateur theatricals of the burnt-cork moustache type and left secret-service to his colleague the Commercial Attaché, a round-headed man with a large grey moustache that nearly described a complete circle and made him look like an illustration in a sensational romance of Russian nihilists in the 'eighties. The Commercial Attaché was not a social figure. Indeed, as I remember, he had long retired from the Russian Navy and was in business somewhere in the Levant at the outbreak of war.

I was under an impression formed while I was still at school that the Russian secret-service was the most professionally equipped of all. So, when their Commercial Attaché in Athens invited me to a gloomy house and offered to put me in the way of obtaining the services of the finest agent procurable I blessed my good fortune. The agent in question, whom I called Jack Horner because on the night that Tucker and I were taken to see him first he sat in a dark corner of the room and pulled out spies with such complacent relish, was a tiny man with a completely bald head, a tight dark beard, a tail-coat, and plump little hairy hands that used to creep in and out of a pair of highly glazed cuffs like baby guinea pigs when he sat with his arms on the table and uttered in a low mysterious voice what I presently discovered to be the basest of lies. The first plum Jack Horner gave us was a most circumstantial denunciation of a Turkish spy at Mudros, who was arrested at our suggestion. But when we told the nasty little man to muster the witnesses he had promised for the court martial none was forthcoming. And that was the end of Jack Horner, whose real name as I write these words abruptly comes back to me from the past. Zorki. I have no hesitation in printing it as a trifling satisfaction for the eight hundred drachmas we wasted on the little brute. He vanished from Athens when we sacked him, because he heard that K 69, the unfortunate man he had denounced, was on his way from Mudros to put a knife into him. However, all that K 69 did when he reached Athens was to call on Sir Francis Elliot and ask him to pay his salary while he had been in prison.

After the recommendation of Zorki my awe of the Russian secret-service was dispelled.

Colonel Mombelli, the newly arrived Italian Military Attaché, whom I fancy I met for the first time at the reception that night was a friend from the first and remained

a friend. He with his delightful wife and plump little daughter of fifteen was staying at the Hotel d'Angleterre. He himself was a tall meagre man with grizzled dark hair and a pair of pince-nez which did not detract in the least from his air of soldierly authority, but on the contrary enhanced it. In 1917 he was promoted to be general and left Athens to take over the command of the Italian forces at Salonica. I always found him the quickest of the Allied officers in Athens to grasp the essentials of a situation whether it was a question of politics, or of diplomacy, or of strategy, or merely of routine. The result was that he and I probably wasted less of one another's time than any two people in Greece during those feverish days. What a relief it was going to be when I was working sometimes twenty hours in the twenty-four, to learn that Colonel Mombelli wanted to see me for ten minutes, for I would be sure that the visit really would not occupy more than those ten minutes and that by the end of it we should probably both know better where we were than when he came in. An intelligent, industrious, cool-headed, courtly man with plenty of ambition, but a contempt for intrigue, he was a model of what a military attaché should be.

It may have been at the Italian Legation that I first met Mr. Garrett Droppers, the American Minister, who was like an American Minister in a novel or a play; and, so unerringly did he speak and behave as one expected he would, I ended by finding it hard to believe he was real. I felt like a reviewer who finds that a novelist has not taken the trouble to provide a stock figure with distinguishing life. Before President Wilson made him Minister to His Majesty the King of the Hellenes Mr. Droppers had been a Professor at Williamstown University in Massachusetts, where he was an authority upon International Law, and whence he had brought with him to Europe every New England prejudice he possessed. His life in Athens ap-

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

peared to be a protracted exasperation with the backwardness of Europe. His credulity was excessive and after listening to his tirades I felt I understood a little better that astonishing business of the witch-burnings in Salem.

"Of course in America we can't understand this king business at all. To us it seems kind of mad for educated human beings to have kings."

But there was more that Mr. Droppers could not understand, among other things that various benighted European countries were fighting for their very existence. He had written a book on International Law, and his attitude in Greece during those heartbreaking years remained that of an angry professor who has been compelled to watch a lot of naughty little boys deliberately tearing out page after page of his life's work.

I met many other people at the Italian Legation, but there will be opportunities to introduce them later on, and my most vivid memory of that reception is a conversation with the Crown Prince about the Dardanelles and the late Balkan wars. The impression that remains is of talking about war in the same spirit as two young men might talk about the play of a football game. The larger issues remained in the background, and it was merely of incidents amusing, pathetic, or exciting that we talked. I remember his telling me of being nearly hit by a shell at the Battle of Janina and of the thrilling march on Salonica, and then the conversation was interrupted by Contessa Bosdari who was anxious for the Crown Prince to sit down in order that the rest of her guests might be able to sit down. So I was led away and presented to some Greek lady to whom I chattered commonplaces for awhile. And now the picture of that golden-lighted interior with its columns and marble floor and murmur of French and swirl of slowly waving fans fades into the stars and sapphire of an Athenian night as I walked past a line of waiting cars to see at the end of a

ONE SEPTEMBER DAY

long row the plump form of Tucker leaning against a lamp-post. We got into the car he had hired and were no sooner seated than it shot off in the direction of Phaleron. The wind blew cool and grateful on our faces and the smell of the sea gradually conquered the smell of dust and benzene. Leaning back in my seat, I was thinking that to whirl along this road with the false-pepper trees leaping one by one into a pale green feathery radiance as they caught the lights of the car was the most exquisite motion imaginable, until at about fifty miles an hour we were shot up from our seats by a bump in the road, when I suddenly remembered that we were carrying bombs.

"Tell that fellow not to drive so fast," I said to Tucker. "Remember what we've got in this box."

But you might as well try to catch a shooting star as expect a Greek chauffeur to drive a yard less than forty miles an hour, and the thought of that case of bombs took some of the freshness out of the sea air, so that I was thankful when we stopped beside some steps leading down to a small boat that was waiting for us. We pulled for a couple of hundred yards over the dark oily water of Phaleron harbour, on which the shore lamps were radiating long spokes of blurred gold, until we came alongside the *Valkyrie* which was an auxiliary-cutter of some twenty tons burden. On deck three or four dim shapes of humanity rolled in blankets were sleeping when we passed down the companion to the cabin, where for the first time I saw Rogers.

Rogers was sitting at the table in the middle of that small cabin, looking strangely enigmatic by the light of the smoky oil lamp that trembled faintly sometimes at a gentle movement of the water. Clean-shaven, tanned, with curly brown hair slightly grizzled at the temples, blue-eyed, he seemed at a first glance not more than twenty-five years old, and perhaps it was being actually well into the forties that

gave him this enigmatic look, though indeed when later I had grown to think I knew him really well I discovered that my first impression of him had been the true one. He might have served sitting there in the cabin of the *Valkyrie* that night as a model for a study of one of Conrad's subtle mariners. He was a Dorset man; but the East had taken from him all that Dorset had bestowed save only that complexion as of a ripe October apple. He had been in the Danube trade just before the war, and now with the rank of Lieutenant-Commander in the Royal Naval Reserve he was attached to C's organization as skipper of the *Valkyrie*. I can see him now and the way he looked up at me from under his eyes in that murky golden cabin as if he were asking himself what part I should play in his future.

"Here's the parcel, Rogers," said Tucker, putting down on the table the case of those bombs disguised as coals.

"Are the men aboard already?"

Rogers nodded slowly.

"And you're sailing at once?"

Again Rogers nodded slowly.

"Shall I pay the first instalment down here?"

Rogers rose from his seat and shouted up the companion, down which in response to the summons four sleepy ruffians with tousled hair and fierce waxed moustaches slouched into the cabin. Tucker paid them out in greasy notes half of what they would receive if the Kuleli Burgas bridge were blown up. They counted the notes and retired to their blankets on the deck.

"There's no more you want to say to the men?" Rogers asked.

"No, they've got all their directions," said Tucker. "Well, good luck, old man, see you again soon, I hope. Ching-a-ling!"

With this we left the *Valkyrie* and as we pulled back to the harbour steps in the dinghy I said something about

ONE SEPTEMBER DAY

Rogers being a mysterious figure to captain such a mysterious craft as that we had just left.

"Old Rogers mysterious?" the plump man chuckled. "Oh, he's not mysterious really. But he was wondering who on earth you were and what you'd got to do with it, and seeing that he was so blooming curious I thought it would be rather a lark to keep him guessing."

Then Tucker turned to our chauffeur with the air of Drake landing on Plymouth Hoe.

"Embros!" he commanded tremendously, or in English 'forward.'

We drove back to Athens at fifty miles an hour, and since we had unloaded our bombs I was no longer minding how fast we drove now beneath that great sapphire sky, beneath those fountainous stars.

Somewhere round about two o'clock I sat down in the hotel to do another hour's work at my palsied table, after which on what was now the tenth of September I went to bed.

CHAPTER VIII

BACK TO G.H.Q.

EXACTLY a month after I had left it and on the thirteenth of September I came back to G.H.Q. The incidents of the voyage in the *Imogen* from Phaleron to Imbros elude my recollection, perhaps because I was worrying all the way up through the Ægean lest my first return to G.H.Q. should end in the authorities making other arrangements about my future. Much was changed even to the eye when I landed once again on that sandy promontory of Kephalo and made my slow way up through the lines to report my arrival; but above all it was the profound despondency which clung to the whole place that was so evident. I was glad to find that Darwin, my servant, had been taken on by a newcomer, for I had been afraid he might have been sent back to the Peninsula when I was so long away in Athens. The tent in which Keeling and I had laughed so much together looked depressing without Keeling's shrubbery of shaving-brushes and pyramid of rubber sponges. The social diphthong which had been created by the amalgamation of the Operations Mess and the Intelligence Mess had suffered a diæresis, and instead of that big marquee where we all used to eat together the O people were in one small marquee and the I people in another. There seemed to have been a great deal of getting on one another's nerves since I had been absent. Although I felt guilty to have been enjoying myself so much in Athens during the past fortnight, my tales of absurd people like Clarence were welcome and I was granted that sharpest of

pleasures in the assurance of people I admired and loved being really glad to see me again. I had had several letters to tell me that my tales were missed, but paper cannot smile nor ink light up like the eyes of friends. Yet the dead hand of failure was heavy upon that camp at Kephalo. There was not one who had heard the troops cheering from those transports which sailed slowly out over the blue water of Mudros Bay upon that quiet April afternoon, not one who had seen after that grey and glassy April dawn the sun rise out of Asia to shine upon the landing but knew now that there was no longer any hope of beholding Constantinople. And those officers latterly come from England or France knew it just as well. On them depression already sat as heavily as on those who had started with such dreams.

Colonel Ward was no longer head of the Intelligence. The gruff old Gunner had gone home sick. His place had been taken by Colonel G. E. Tyrrell, a Gunner too, but one who had had more experience of this part of the world, for he had been three years with the Macedonian Gendarmerie and Military Attaché for another four years in Constantinople and Athens. Colonel Tyrrell was far better able to appreciate what was wanted in Greece than Colonel Ward would ever have been ; but I sadly missed that look of impenetrable scepticism and blank obstructiveness to which I had grown affectionately accustomed when attempting to put something up to 'Wardie.' I missed that horse-hair whisk with which he used to obliterate his flies as unerringly as with a grunt he would simultaneously obliterate the brightest and most pertinacious of one's proposals.

Guy Dawnay too had gone home at the end of August ; but his brother-in-law, Robin Buxton, an old friend, had come out to take up a job as Staff Captain. I used to think as I watched him going off every morning with dispatches for the various headquarters at Suvla how much he seemed

to be walking out from the pavilion to bat on some sunny cricket pitch of ten years ago. The shelling on the beach at Suvla was getting bad. Robin Buxton had had a horse killed under him last week. 'Sandy' Hore-Ruthven had been severely hit and was now in hospital at Malta after a ghastly voyage across the Mediterranean lying upon a truss of straw on deck all the way. And when Robin used to come back to Kephalo in the evening after his round of visits the way he would be telling of how he had just failed to stop this or that shell used to sound like some mad inversion of a sportsman's return home, for instead of having to excuse himself for missing his bird he was the bird.

The day after I got back to Imbros Sir Ian Hamilton sent word that I was to have tea with him and give him the news of Athens. I was shocked by the change in him that this last month had wrought. The disappointment of Suvla followed by long days of uncertainty about the future of the Expedition had told heavily upon the Commander-in-Chief. That fly-blown arid little hut among the fretted shadows of a few starveling trees was become a prison. That poor impermanent little shelter which was meant to be left behind here so soon as of no more importance than the dry pod of a locust-bean had taken root. It was become as immovable as the War Office itself. This cocoon from which Sir Ian had been expecting to emerge so quickly and fly to Constantinople had failed to produce the wings. I did not know when I sat at tea with him that afternoon how near he was to receiving that fatal telegram from Lord Kitchener which announced the postponement of the promised new Divisions and foreshadowed the Salonica landing. It would be deciphered before dinner to-night.

Looking back now at our conversation I realize that in Sir Ian Hamilton's own heart the telegram had already been deciphered.

"Help yourself," he said, pushing across the flimsy

table a plate of cakes that seemed all currants until the currants flew up with a buzz and revealed the cakes. "How are things going in Athens?"

"Well, sir, after the reports we've been having about the anxiety of the Greeks to come in on our side my first impressions of Athens have been thoroughly discouraging."

"In what way, discouraging?" he asked sharply.

I could tell by the tone of his voice that he was in no mood to hear unpleasant facts. It cost me an effort to tell him what I thought was the truth. It seemed so ungracious to come back from Athens whither I had only been sent through his consideration and add my quota of pessimism to the general sum. However, I plucked up courage and went ahead.

"Well, sir, I really don't think there's the slightest possibility of the Greeks' coming in against us," I began.

"Coming in against us?" Sir Ian interrupted. "What on earth are you talking about?"

"Such a possibility is being discussed in some circles," I insisted.

He uttered a contemptuous ejaculation, and I plunged on.

"However, sir, I do not think that there is any danger of that. But I cannot see the slightest prospect at present of their intervening on our side. I've talked to all sorts and conditions of people in Athens from the little shoeblacks outside the cafés to the Crown Prince himself, and it is simply impossible not to recognize that in Athens at any rate the general opinion is that the King is right and that Venizelos is wrong. It's true that Venizelos won the elections handsomely last June; but his return to power was cleverly postponed, and the situation out here has not improved . . . from the point of view of the average Greek, I mean, sir."

"The average Greek knows nothing whatever about the

military situation," Sir Ian interposed with signs of choler rising.

"Quite so, sir," I agreed. "But I'm trying to give you an impression of the present feeling in Athens. I feel fairly positive that, if a plebiscite were taken at this moment, the King's policy of neutrality would be endorsed by three-quarters of the population of Old Greece, and by a great many more in New Greece than any of us seem to think."

"If that's all you've found out from your month in Athens," said Sir Ian scornfully, "you've made poor use of your opportunities. Let me tell you that I have only to hold up my little finger and the Greeks will come in on our side to-morrow. Don't forget I was born in Corfu, young man, and that I know something about the Greeks."

By repeating this conversation I have done an injustice to Sir Ian Hamilton if I suggest that he really believed what he was saying. Even at the time, I apprehended that will not reason inspired his confidence, but for the moment I was nonplussed by what appeared to me a deliberate, indeed an almost insensate blindness to the facts of the situation. However, it was not long before I began to grasp that he had by now reached a point of such extreme nervous exhaustion that, whatever he might himself believe about the worst that could happen, he was physically incapable of listening to an expression of it in words from another. For so many months he had been compelling himself to hope against hope for success out here that the lightest hint of contradicting what he wanted to believe was like a gadfly piercing the almost threadbare cloak of optimism with which he was still trying to shelter his imagination against the ineluctable. No doubt at the time this contemptuous dismissal of what I had been supposing was careful and judicious exploration of Greek opinion piqued my *amour-propre*, and my first impulse was to attribute Sir Ian's reception of my remarks to the opinionated vanity

of a Commander-in-Chief. But if I was staggered for a moment or two by such wilful obscurantism I had enough imagination to understand how much a man in his position must have suffered of ruthless disappointment before he could allow such a comparatively unimportant expression of an unwelcome point of view to sting him thus.

"Well, sir," I said, "you must have much more real knowledge of the Greek situation than myself, but if you are calculating upon Greek intervention to solve the problem of Gallipoli I think you ought to consider the possibility of the country's supporting King Constantine's point of view."

Then to change the subject slightly I related what Admiral Mark Kerr had told me about the Greek General Staff's Plan of Operations for forcing the Dardanelles and occupying Constantinople.

"Did you ever see that plan of operations, sir?" I asked. "Admiral Kerr said it was sent by him to the Admiralty through the good will of the Greek General Staff, and that its receipt had never been acknowledged."

"I don't know anything about its acknowledgment," Sir Ian snapped, "but I do know that it was a rotten Plan of Operations."

And then he went on to tell me why; but of his criticism I only remember that he took particular exception to a proposed landing in the Gulf of Enos which his naval advisers had ruled out absolutely from the start, though such a landing was essential if the Greek plan was to be carried through. Soon I left the arid little hut, and I did not see Sir Ian Hamilton again for many years.

Lord Bertie had just written in his Diary:

There are rumours, well-founded, I believe, of a large French expedition to the Eastern Mediterranean. I suppose that the 'political' General Sarraill will

command it independently of Ian Hamilton, for the French are not minded to waste men in the Gallipoli Peninsula.

I spent most of my time at G.H.Q. working hard with Graves at the various dossiers and files of contre-espionage. In spite of the feeling at the back of all our minds that the end of Gallipoli was in sight, Deedes and I discussed the future on the assumption that it was not. It was unfortunate that neither of us knew anything then about the Salonica business, though if we had, it would probably have made no difference, because the Intelligence at Army Headquarters in Salonica was determined from the first to have nothing to do with the Intelligence at General Headquarters. Still, it is possible that something might have been done to make the work in Athens more effective by a closer and directer co-operation with A.H.Q.

Deedes promised to maintain his monthly subsidy of £150 for as long as he could, even if circumstances should take G.H.Q. to Egypt.

"To Egypt?" I echoed. "Do you mean that there is any thought of evacuating the Peninsula?"

"It may be the only thing to do," he replied.

"But do you believe in this great offensive against Egypt by the Turks and Germans? I believe it's only a bluff to keep troops locked up there which might otherwise be sent to the help of the Serbians and so perhaps bring in Greece and keep Bulgaria neutral."

"Well, whatever happens," said Deedes, "Athens is going to become more and more important as a centre of enemy activities, and if you take my advice you'll try to get your services definitely asked for by V. Then you could be seconded for service under the Foreign Office, and when the situation is clearer next Spring we can get you back if you want to come back."

"Here?"

Deedes did not answer; but his long upper lip lengthened a little.

On the Wednesday night before I was to go back to Athens in the *Imogen* General Braithwaite, the C.G.S., asked me to dine with him in the Operations Mess. About half-past six I had that shuddering stab in the heel which portended a bad attack of sciatic neuralgia, and by the time I sat down to dinner the tendons under my left knee were contracting in spasms of absolutely intolerable agony. I sat on through the meal, trying to talk amusingly about Athens; but my face was growing greyer and greyer every moment, and my forehead was dripping.

"You're looking very seedy, Mackenzie," said the C.G.S. suddenly. "What's the matter?"

At that I gave up and retired from the table, muttering the silly excuses one does when fighting acute pain.

"You'd better lie down," General Braithwaite advised.

So I stretched myself out on a wooden bench which ran along the side of the marquee and lay there listening to the talk and feeling thoroughly tiresome. Val Braithwaite insisted on leaving his dinner and sitting beside me to gaze at my spasms with an expression of perplexed sympathy.

"Look here, old thing, what about getting Hare to come and have a squint at you?"

So he rushed off and came back presently with the Doctor, who prescribed morphine; unfortunately his last hypodermic syringe had been broken some time ago and he was still waiting for a new supply, so he had to give me a morphia pill instead, which he warned me would not work as quickly as an injection.

"Hadn't he better be sent on board the *Imogen* at once?" General Braithwaite suggested.

"But my packing," I muttered in feeble protest.

"That's all right, old thing, I'll do your packing," Val

interposed. "You keep your mouth shut and suck old Hare's pill."

My mouth was acrid with the bitterness of the morphia, but the pain had by now reached that point when a loud laugh is the only possible retort to it. So I kept laughing idiotically, until about nine o'clock two orderlies came with a stretcher and carried me down that sandy slope for the last time. Then they put the stretcher upon the beach for me to lie there until a boat could come off from the *Imogen* to take me on board. The morphia pill was still dissolving slowly underneath my tongue, and in an attempt to distract myself while waiting for the first sign of relief I started to ascertain how many stars I could count.

"This means being invalided out anyway," I murmured to myself.

And Hare who had come down to see how I was getting on agreed.

At last Val Braithwaite arrived to say that all my kit was packed and would be sent aboard with me.

"By the way, here's a parcel," he said, "which I found for you in the Q tent."

But I was in too much pain to care what the damned parcel was, and he put it on the stretcher beside me. How little I thought then that this was the last time I should ever speak to Val Braithwaite on this earth. He was promising to come to Athens for a week-end at the first opportunity; but the opportunity passed, because when Sir Ian Hamilton was recalled a month later he went back with his father, whose aide-de-camp he had been, and when General Braithwaite was given command of the 62nd Division Val remained with him for a while. But the boy grew restless. When only just eighteen he had already been fighting in 1914 with the First Battalion of his regiment, the Somerset Light Infantry, and had gained one of the earliest Military Crosses awarded. It worried him to think

that he was not back with that First Battalion. There was nothing in Val of what the Italians used to call scornfully *figlio di pappa* (daddy's boy). So he suggested to his father that he should take on in his place as aide-de-camp an officer who had been wounded and lost an eye. It was characteristic of Val and characteristic of Winchester that the substitute proposed for himself should be a Wykehamist. General Braithwaite listened to the arguments of his only son, admitted the force of them, and agreed that he should apply to rejoin his regiment. The application was approved and Val was sent to Crown Hill to wait there for reinforcements which were about to leave for France. After waiting for a fortnight he grew impatient at the slowness of the procedure and begged his father to go to the War Office and get his departure expedited. Val, now just nineteen, was distressed to think of reserve officers and officers who had recently been commissioned being posted to *his* battalion while a seasoned veteran of the war like himself was available.

So General Braithwaite went to the War Office, and Val was sent out at once. On arrival in France he like all reinforcements found himself at Etaples where to his dismay he heard that instead of being posted to the First Battalion he was to join the Eighth. This to Val must have seemed like being taken away from Winchester and sent to—well, some other school. He tried to persuade the officials at Etaples what a sacrilege was being contemplated; but the officials lacked imagination, and Val in despair sent a personal telegram to the Chief of Staff of the British Army in France, a boyish and appealing telegram to beg that the plan of sending him to the Eighth Battalion might be countermanded. The Chief of Staff was an old friend of his father's, but we may believe that good William of Wykeham leaned down over the gold bar of Heaven and prodded him with a reproachful crozier. Certainly the Chief of Staff

did intervene. Previous orders were cancelled and Val was sent back immediately to the First Battalion. For a month he acted as Adjutant while preparations were being made for the First of July attack on the Somme. Ten days before the battle, however, Val took care to rejoin his own company, and on the first of July he led his platoon forward. The last seen of him was charging well ahead of everybody else, and disappearing into a German trench alone. From that moment no word or sign of him was heard or found. He must have been blown up by a shell. Of that First Battalion of the Somerset Light Infantry only fifty or sixty came back from this battle, commanded by another young subaltern of the same seniority as Val.

The last picture I have of the boy is a dark outline of his form in the starlight looming above me prostrate on the beach at Kephalo ; but it is as he looked in the early days of Gallipoli that I think of him ' sun-coloured to the imperishable core.'

Hare saw me aboard the *Imogen* and by about eleven o'clock the morphia pill began to have its effect. But although the pain was less I could not sleep. Captain Potts came down to the after-cabin of his little yacht and sat for a while beside my bunk before he turned in, shaking his Punch-like head and offering to carry me anywhere I could think of in the ship to feel more comfortable. He was a man of huge strength, as I have already related with anecdotes in a previous volume, and I believe if I had suggested that he should rock me to sleep in his arms he would have done so gladly and easily.

When I was alone and trying to defeat the wakefulness which morphia always inflicts on some people despite its name, I began to reproach myself for the feeble way I had put the case of Greece before Sir Ian Hamilton yesterday afternoon. What I had meant to suggest was that unless we showed ourselves resolved to take Constantinople

Venizelos could not hope to persuade his countrymen into war. What I had said was . . . what had I said? And anyway what did it matter? Nothing I could say was likely to affect the issue. But the less important my undrugged self came to think it in comparison with the pain it suffered, the more important my drugged self found it. In rising superior to pain it fancied that it could solve the whole problem of the Balkans. That drugged self in conquering pain had become lord of space and time and able to pierce the very problem of life itself. It transformed the surface of the globe as easily as by a movement of the body I could change the surface of the bed-clothes.

Soon pain returned to humble the soaring mind, and it was driven to occupy itself again with the tangible. I turned to the parcel which Val Braithwaite had brought down and opening it found that it contained two copies of *Guy and Pauline* which Martin Secker must have posted off to me the moment they arrived from the binder. I could picture him at Number Five John Street, and the gesture with which he would have patted the volumes rather in the way a baker pats his dough before they were wrapped up in the brown paper. This time two years ago we were in the thick of what the Press wanting excitement in the dull first half of September called the Great Book War. Exactly two years ago almost to a day I had been looking at the first scarlet copies of *Sinister Street* and urging Secker to defy the commercial puritanism of the Circulating Libraries which threatened to make it no thoroughfare. There would be little enough excitement over *Guy and Pauline*, and that Secker should have chosen crushed strawberry for the colour of its binding was most appropriate, for as I looked at it now in the cabin of the *Imogen* the book seemed to be no more than that.

Having nothing else to read and being still maddeningly

wide awake, I began to turn over the pages in search of that inevitable misprint and as I read on I was back in yet another September farther still away, back at Ladyham in Burford, sitting in that large bay window, which hung right over the stream ; with a view of the orchard, of the church steeple, of the watermeadows beyond and of the wold rolling across the horizon, and through the stuffy air of the cabin came *'a smell of meadowsweet softening with a summer languor the sharp September night.'* I was *'upstairs in the library again, dreaming the evening away ; and while the lamp hummed slowly and olidly to extinction . . .'* no, it was slowly and oilily which was printed. In a rage with my carelessness I dragged myself out of the bunk to fumble in my kitbag for the duplicate proofs of the book. Could I really have passed *'oilily'* ? No, here it was, *'olidly.'* So it was some too zealous printer's reader who at the very last moment before passing for press must have changed *'olidly'* to *'oilily.'* I had spent the better part of a day in the search for that adverb with which I had hoped to convey the very smell of an expiring lamp, and now to find it changed to such a commonplace, unrhythmical, cacophonous adverb as *'oilily'* threw me into such a despair that I could not read another word.

I lay awake for the rest of the night, indulging in an exasperated soliloquy with that printer's reader.

"But why didn't you look up *'olid'* in the dictionary ?" I was asking him reproachfully.

"It wasn't in my dictionary, Mr. Mackenzie," he explained.

"But good god," I replied, "why on earth *should* I write smoking oilily ? Can't you see that *'olid'* suggests an unpleasant oiliness, a kind of active and malignant oiliness ? What would inspire a printer to misprint *'olidly'* for *'oilily'* ? I read the proofs very carefully and passed them. The blame would have been entirely mine if *'olidly'* had

been a mistake. People who thought that I really meant 'oilily' wouldn't have mattered."

"I am really very sorry indeed, Mr. Mackenzie, but I never thought . . ."

"Oh, I realize that you didn't deliberately change one of my words. But I am anxious to make you see what a crime you have committed. If you read that sentence aloud you will notice how difficult it is to say 'slowly and oilily' to extinction, whereas 'slowly and olidly' suggests the effort that the wretched wick starved of oil made to keep alight, just as 'extinction' suggests the smell it made in burning itself out. Try substituting 'death' or 'annihilation' or 'eclipse' and see how it would wreck the sentence."

"Well, of course, now you point it out, Mr. Mackenzie," said the printer's reader, "I can see you meant to use 'olidly.' But it wasn't in my dictionary, and so I thought it was a slip for 'oilily.' And I suppose it means the same thing."

"It does not mean the same thing. Olid means fetid and rank-smelling from the Latin *olere*, to smell. But it suggests by assonance the bad smell of oil. Oilily would have been a disgusting redundancy, a vile pleonasm. What else would you expect a lamp to be except oily? You don't burn vinegar in lamps."

"It's most unfortunate, Mr. Mackenzie. And I did do it all for the best as I thought. Perhaps an erratum slip?"

"Too late. Too late. Brendons had a printing order for fifteen thousand. Besides I'm in the cabin of what used to be the yacht of the British Embassy at Constantinople. I'm in Kephalo Bay."

"Quite. Quite."

"Off the Dardanelles."

"Quite. Quite."

"Though I don't mind telling you that we shall never never get through."

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

"Quite. Quite."

"But we could have got through if the people at home had realized that oilily is not the same thing as olidly. But they cannot realize anything at home."

"Quite. Quite."

"They cannot even realize that the Bulgarians have already decided to come in against us at the right moment for them. But Sir Edward Grey listens only to the Brothers Buxton and Bouchier and Brailsford and everybody else whose name begins with B. He has B in his bonnet."

"Quite. Quite."

"You're a printer's reader. Why don't you delete all B's? Then you'd justify your existence."

"Quite. Quite."

"We write Venizelos with a V because the Greek beta is pronounced like V. But if you saw his name printed in Greek it would be Benizelos, and it's my belief that if he wrote it that way in English Sir Edward Grey would listen to him."

"Quite. Quite."

"Which reminds me that I have a man in my organization who is known as B. His real name is Tucker; but B suited his figure which tends to be obese. You perceive the point of using obese instead of 'adipose,' or 'corpulent'? Don't change 'obese' which contains a suggestive assonance. However, B shall be deleted. In future he shall be called Q, because thereby hangs the tale which Tucker is always telling."

That imaginary printer's reader appeared at intervals all through the night; but the tiresome phantom, whose head always swelled to the size of a huge pumpkin and burst as a preliminary to its temporary disappearance, did not like the phantoms of Elizabethan drama contribute anything to my knowledge of the future.

It was already light when I fell asleep and dreamed that

I was trying to climb up a ladder to get down a volume of the New English Dictionary from my old room in Burford. My leg hurt so much that I could not climb, and at last, in an effort to reach the volume I wanted, every book on my shelves came crashing down about me. And as I sat up in my bunk waking from this dream the noise in reality was louder than in the dream.

Every gun on every ship in the harbour was firing. Through the port I could see an aeroplane hovering over G.H.Q., the dust and smoke of exploding bombs, and the figures of men running hither and thither in the clear morning air. I clambered out of my bunk to go on deck ; but when I reached it the giddiness caused by the morphia made me lurch about so much and feel so sick that I had to retire below again. The first biplane was succeeded by a Taube, and the Taube by another biplane. It was a noisy and anxious half-hour, for rumour in the shape of the ship's steward came down once or twice to tell me of terrible havoc at G.H.Q. From where I was everything over there looked as usual, and ultimately we heard that apart from a bad mess-up by the Signal Tent, where five of our poor chaps had been hit, no damage had been done. One bomb had fallen just outside the Intelligence Mess and interrupted breakfast. The pain with the obliterating egotism it induces in the victim engrossed me for the rest of the day, and that night we sailed back to Athens. An unpleasant night it was too. The sickness of morphia was succeeded by the sickness caused by the rolling and plunging of a small pleasure yacht in a heavy sea. I was pitched right out of my bunk several times, and my leg resented it very much ; but when with daylight we ran into kinder waters I managed to escape from the self-centred whirlwind of intense pain and recognize that I was not alone in a hostile world.

There were three other passengers beside myself. It was appropriate that my old friend Orlo Williams should

preside over my departure from the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, for I owed it to him that I had been able to get out here at all. Six months ago to a day in His Majesty's destroyer *Phaeton* he had been racing up the Ægean at thirty knots with Sir Ian Hamilton. At three o'clock they had dropped anchor in the harbour of Tenedos. Twenty-four hours later the great attempt to force the Straits by ships alone had failed, and the laughter of the Gods was heard again in Olympus.

It was in the *Phaeton* that Orlo had noticed the second volume of *Sinister Street*, among the books Sir Ian Hamilton had brought with him to read on that momentous voyage in a destroyer whose name was of ill omen to the most dauntless hopes. It was in the *Phaeton* that he had mentioned my anxiety to be doing something in the war and had thus obtained for me an experience of which I was now seeing the end. Yet the *Imogen* rolling down the Ægean was for me another *Phaeton*. Had not Deedes agreed that whatever happened the importance of Athens as a centre of Intelligence was bound to increase? Did not everything favour the job into which by one of fortune's idle gusts I had been blown?

'*This crimson in the Eastern sky, these waves of liquid opal are natal, vital,*' Sir Ian Hamilton was writing in his *Gallipoli Diary* on March 17th. On September 17th I would have written in a similar strain, though the sea between us and the Sporades looked grey and sulky, for with every sea mile nearer to Athens the longing to knock that absurd little contre-espionage bureau into shape was with the intensity of it beginning to defeat pain and sickness. What did it matter if a lamp hummed olidly or oilily to extinction? I was going to drive the Chariot of the Sun, and being by nature as sanguine as Phaethon had not the least notion that it might become unmanageable.

A more practical exponent of aerial adventures was

another fellow passenger. This was Flight Commander Mackie* of the Royal Naval Air Service who was on his way home to bring back some of those small observation balloons whose forms should they ever succeed in floating above Lampsacus might rouse jealousy in the divine Lamp-sacene himself. Mackie was an alert sharp-featured young man of my own age. I was sure that nothing would prevent his bringing back those balloons, if to bring them he had to inflate them himself outside the Admiralty and float away on a north-wester above the astonished gaze of the children in the Green Park. He was chuckling over what he called the cinematograph of Bell Daviest† in a one and a half struttr chasing Madrali the Terrible Turk back to Galatea. That was his view of the air-raid on G.H.Q. that morning. But it was books not balloons that he wanted to talk about on this voyage to Athens, and talk about them he did, though I expect I should have learnt a great deal more from him about balloons, had he only talked about them, than he learnt from me about books.

Mackie had an absurd adventure when he reached Phaleron. He did not drive up at once to Athens, but hired a boat to go and look for the *S.S. Bulgaria*, an Italian steamer in which his passage had been booked to continue his journey. He sailed round from Phaleron into the Piræus, but nowhere in the harbour could he discern a sign of the *Bulgaria*. Finally, he went ashore in R.N.A.S. uniform and rushed about asking people for the whereabouts of the missing ship. Having no Greek all he could say was 'Bulgaria!' 'Bulgaria!' This was hardly the moment for a British Naval Officer to shout 'Bulgaria' in the faces of Greeks, and it was not surprising that all recoiled in horror and disgust from his exclamation. Mackie fearing that he would presently be arrested and interned

* Col. T. D. Mackie, C.M.G., O.B.E., R.A.F.

† Capt. R. B. Davies, V.C., D.S.O., R.N.

went back to the *Imogen* where he found nobody left on board except a few engineers. He borrowed from a stoker a dungaree jacket, pulled the badge off his cap, and drove to the Legation where he asked for me. By this time Mackie was so much excited that the people at the Legation took him for a distressed seaman and tried to send him down to the Consulate at the Piræus. However, presently John Ward appeared and all was well. It turned out afterwards that the *Bulgaria* had been torpedoed and was no longer above water.

Captain John Ward,* the third of my fellow-passengers, was the War Office Messenger that week. We had already travelled up together in the *Imogen* when the conversation had been of Greek politics. He was a man of quick sympathy and easily stirred imagination, and no doubt at that date when it was still seeming possible to recover from the effects of a gauche diplomacy I was eloquent enough. I remember developing the theory that we were negotiating with Greece as if it were a masculine nation and with Bulgaria as if it were feminine, whereas the converse in either case was the right method of approach. I remember too insisting that, whereas people at home only supposed that we were hurting King Constantine's feelings by our manner, we were actually wounding Greece itself. But what I argued has no importance, for during this second half of September the Gods on high Olympus having laughed themselves hoarse over Gallipoli had now decided that Gallipoli was become a bore and looking round had perceived Salonica almost at their feet.

Yet the mind clings to the memory of such talks as those I had with John Ward whose name expresses so completely his personality that I feel it superfluous to add a word of professional description. They seem in retrospect to have put one's conscience right like a good confession.

* Major Hon. Sir John Ward, K.C.V.O.

BACK TO G. H. Q.

There was a moment, one reminds oneself, when all that we could say was said and when all that we said was proved by later events to have been a completely accurate forecast of what would happen. It was at that date a level-headed judgment, given before I was become like everybody else in Greece the prey of faction, prejudice, impatience, and suspicion, before the nerves had begun to sear the brain with their lightning, before that dazzling sun and that intoxicating air of Athens had turned life into a spinning top in one's endeavour to act and think and write fast enough for such a scene.

A fortnight after John Ward had left I received from him a present of twelve pipes, some of which I am still gratefully smoking, and much more coolly than I smoked them during those feverish months ahead of me fifteen years ago.



FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES
COMPTON MACKENZIE
Part II

IX	THE BRITISH SCHOOL	194
X	THE ENTRY OF BULGARIA	211
XI	STAFF WORK	240
XII	HOUSES AND PEOPLE	278
XIII	THE HURRIED DEPARTURE	307
XIV	BACK IN ATHENS	340
XV	THE END OF THE YEAR	367
	INDEX	395

CHAPTER IX

THE BRITISH SCHOOL

FOR a fortnight after that visit to G.H.Q. my leg behaved unsatisfactorily; nevertheless except during attacks of violent pain I was able to move about, and recovery was hastened by my new quarters in the British Archæological School, which I owed to the kindness of the Director, A. J. B. Wace,* who himself was helping with the Chancery work at the Legation. Wace provided a delightful combination of great scholarship and humour, a worldly humour too and not in the least pedagogic. He was a tall slim man full of nervous energy, with a fresh complexion and an extraordinarily merry pair of light blue eyes. Presently he was to be of the greatest help in launching the passport bureau in Athens which was destined to serve as the model for passport bureaus all over the world.

Besides allowing me the privilege of living up at the British School Wace invited me to join him and Erskine at lunch every day in the Director's house. There are few things I remember with such pleasure as that Mess, which provided every day an opportunity to slip back out of the war into a civilized existence. The renown of Magdalen College in the 'nineties was greatest on the river; but with that pre-eminence of the oar went an attitude which makes a Magdalen man of that decade as unmistakable as a vintage wine. Whatever one may think of the English Idea the fine flower of it was once expressed by the lilies of Magdalen, and it might be claimed that not since a Roman patrician

* A. J. B. Wace, Deputy Keeper of the Victoria and Albert Museum.

in the age of the Antonines had it been possible for a human being to feel so secure of his worldly supremacy as a Magdalen man of the 'nineties. Erskine had belonged to that period, and, brief though his sojourn there had been, he preserved the authentic stamp of a period in the grand style. An attempt to reproduce this quality on the written page would be as idle as to seek to perpetuate in words the bouquet of a supreme claret. Wace himself was a Cambridge man; but with that worldly sense of humour of his he did not like so many intellectual Cambridge men of his period imply a criticism of Oxford flippancy and superficiality. There was no earnest Whiggery about Wace. Nor was he ashamed to display his knowledge of Tiryns and Mycenae against a background of wise humanity. But comparisons like this between Oxford and Cambridge are long out of date. Motor-cars, Rhodes scholars, female undergraduates, and socialist dons between them have so utterly transformed Oxford that the other day when discussing the future university of the son of an old Oxford friend I found myself agreeing with him that perhaps nowadays one or two Cambridge colleges were all that could give a faint flavour of what Oxford was. And Cambridge is fortunate in honouring two of the most essentially Oxford men alive in Lord Chalmers, the Master of Peterhouse, and Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch. But even in 1902 the shadow of 'reform' could darken my mood. I find that in the fourth number of *The Oxford Point of View* I wrote as a nineteen-year old editor these words:

The motion which proposed to do away with Greek in Responsions was thrown out by twenty-three votes, and in the light of the recent clamour for a useful and unornamental education, such a small majority is woefully significant. However, notwithstanding the undoubted claims of a Sound Commercial Education to our consideration, we may humbly

suggest that there are technical schools eager to teach, and that the University of Birmingham is not a very stern Alma Mater. If Greek is to be abolished in Responsions, why not Latin? And if the plea of wasted time be put forward by intending scientists, surely it may be argued with equal justification that the enforced study of Euclid and Arithmetic is a trying ordeal for many others who are not intending scientists. Apart from this utilitarian view, which really has nothing to do with the subject, it would be a pity if Oxford should cease to be conservative even of her own conservatism. Nobody, not even an intending scientist, confers a privilege upon Oxford by taking up his abode there; it is Oxford who confers the honour by allowing him to do so.

But this is to wander unduly. I have been tempted by the memory of those lunches with Wace and Erskine and delight to linger over them in retrospect as we delighted to linger upstairs over our coffee, beholding Athens outspread below.

The British School standing as it did in its own garden above the glittering garish streets of Athens was a quiet place in which to work after the Hotel d'Angleterre. There was about its emptiness the air of a small Cambridge court or Oxford quadrangle in the heart of the Long Vacation. The bedrooms which in times of peace were used by students had the austerity of bedrooms in a college, and to see Joseph unpacking my clothes of which a selection had by now reached me from Capri was to see a college scout at his work. Stavro, to be sure, did not quite fit into the academic picture, and yet in a way he fitted more completely than any of us, for he was the only one who could hold his own with the glories of Greek art, whose shapes in the original marble or in plaster reproductions haunted that empty echoing house. The photographs upon the walls of temples, theatres, and mountains; the faded groups of

THE BRITISH SCHOOL

student archæologists in old-fashioned straw hats, who in bygone years had sojourned here for a while and hence sallied forth to excavate some classic site; the library of Hellenic scholarship and research; the long table in the deserted dining-room; the subtle air of learning which permeated the whole place with a faint dusty perfume; all these spoke of a life ruthlessly interrupted by the war, and all in their so utter desolation seemed to diffuse a dread about the sensitive mind that the life thus interrupted might never be resumed. The tranquil statues and viewless busts upon their pedestals had taken this house for their own, and sharp was the reminder of art's length and life's brevity.

It was appropriate that V should hand over F. W. Hasluck to work with me at the British School, for he was the librarian of it, and summed up in himself the essence of its present abandonment. A Fellow of King's College, Cambridge, he had come to Athens in 1899 and had spent most of his time in Greece and Turkey ever since. He had become a leading authority on many of the by-ways of the mediæval Levant, and for the last two or three years had been devoting himself to the strange web of folk-lore woven from the coloured strands of Islam and Christianity within the Turkish Empire. War came, and being much too delicate for active service he volunteered to work under V. He must have suspected how ill he really was and he could have had little hope now of ever being able to complete those curious investigations which had attracted his patient, accurate, and exquisite mind. This abnegation of all he cared for in order to devote what he could not have but felt was probably the rest of his life to war work remains in my memory as an act of heroism. It was perhaps a little less boring for him to employ his beautiful handwriting in making a card index of the contre-espionage files than to work down in Academy Street at the move-

ments of the Turkish troops. I like to think that the silence and emptiness of the British School was grateful to his spirit, and that while he was sitting in his corner, and registering upon card after card the salient details about those figures who flitted like shadows across our inquisitiveness he was sometimes able to delude himself for a minute with the fancy that he had just arrived in Athens from Cambridge, and that there was no war. We never spoke of this wasted end of a life; but I hope he knew that I understood the sacrifice he was making and appreciated it. In person he was thin to emaciation, with a finely carved nose above a straggling fair moustache. He had a habit of gabbling stories which would probably have been extremely amusing had it been possible to follow more than a few words of what he was saying, because when the tale was told he would fling one arm behind his back, grasp the other elbow, and retire into his corner again, in a rattle of high dry laughter. Mostly, however, he stayed silent at that table in the corner of the room, save for the sound of his careful pen and a perpetual light cough. He used to remind me of a stripped plane-tree, and his cough was like the sound of a withered leaf which had been blown in from the garden, as it stirred in the draught along the bare wooden floor. He was my chief mental consolation throughout the fever of 1916, for whatever I might have to say against official folly he would always have something more trenchant to say in agreement, his head on one side like a bird's. Margaret Hasluck, his wife, who was herself a scholar and a Hellenist, had been working in V's bureau in Athens and joined our Bureau in 1916; but during this autumn of 1915 she was engaged at the headquarters of the C organization in Whitehall Court. Hasluck's health grew worse and worse right through 1916 until finally he had to go to Switzerland, where in 1920 he died in a sanatorium at the age of forty-two.

THE BRITISH SCHOOL

When I wrote those words I stopped to turn again the pages of his posthumous work *Christianity and Islam under the Sultans*, the two volumes of which were published in 1929 under the editorship of his wife. So much curious learning, such an expense of loving care in scholarship and narrative in those eight hundred pages, every one of which I have read for pleasure and for piety, for pleasure because every one delightfully unfolded a little more of the picture of a fascinating and unimagined society, for piety because I wished to pay in the only way I knew how something of the great debt I owed the author.

When Hasluck and I started our card index we had differently coloured cards to indicate a rough classification. There were crimson ones for those whom we considered proved spies, yellow for those who had given us false information, green for those who had helped us, mauve for ladies of easy virtue, and white for the great indeterminate majority. We soon became less confident of being able to place people in set categories, for the proven spy often turned out to be a perfectly innocent man, and the green friend a yellow traitor. So after a month or two we gave up coloured cards and used none but white. By the end of 1916 when Hasluck left us there must have been well over twelve thousand of them, and his single table had grown into three to make room for the boxes which contained them. By the time I was finished myself in September 1917 there were twenty-three thousand cards, but those first cards dating from the beginning of the index at the British School used to colour with romance the boxes of white cards until the end, few and far between though they were; and I never asked Hasluck to give me a card of someone whose record we wanted to look up in the files without musing, while his fingers were flipping back the cards in search of a name and here and there a coloured one would show itself, on the extreme simplicity with which we had thought to

classify the objects of our inquiries in that quiet room looking down on Athens, where through the open window the withered leaves of the plane-trees sailed in from the October sunlight and slid lispings over the bare floor.

It must have been about a week after I went up to live at the British School that Captain Potts of the *Imogen* had his great nocturnal adventure there with the spy. Potts was a man of immense physical strength. Readers of *Gallipoli Memories* may remember my telling of his crossing a road in Athens and with one arm pushing a horse back on to its haunches to stop a hackney carriage from running into him. The nocturnal adventure happened when I was still laid up after my return from G.H.Q., and Potts, who had been spending the evening with Tucker and Clarence, had come up late at night to the School to see how I was. He had stayed chatting for half an hour before saying good night and setting out to find his way back to the yacht.

"You'll want a candle," I warned him, "to find your way downstairs and along the corridor to the front door."

"That's all right," he told me, "I've got an electric torch."

However, just as Potts reached the corridor the electric torch expired and he was left in complete darkness. He decided it would be as easy to grope his way out along the corridor as stumble upstairs again for a candle, so on he went very slowly in the direction of the front door. I have mentioned that he had been spending the evening with Clarence. At this date an evening spent with Clarence was to fill the mind with the most lurid stories of life in the secret-service, which until one knew one's Clarence were likely to make a considerable impression. Potts, groping his way out from the headquarters of contre-espionage in Athens, his fancy primed by Clarence to believe that in this prosaic work-a-day world anything might happen, suddenly perceived ahead of him against the grey glimmer of a

THE BRITISH SCHOOL

window by the front door the outline of a lurking form. He stopped and challenged ; but received no answer.

"Look here," said Potts, "if you don't say who you are, it will be the worse for you. Clarence, old son, if you're trying to put the wind up me, look out for yourself. I'm not in the mood for practical jokes at this time of night."

The sinister form neither spoke nor moved. So Potts, determined not to take any risk of getting a knife under his ribs and thinking that it behoved him to take precautions on behalf of me lying upstairs with a game leg, drew back a mighty fist to a massive shoulder, and then drove it with all his force below the jaw of the taciturn assassin. That the jaw of the assassin, which was of Parian marble, did not completely smash Potts's knuckles, was due to its owner's being a bust on a pedestal, and so less stable than a life-size statue. Still, even as it was, the assassin made a pretty mess of Potts's hand. When I heard the story next day I asked why he had not come back and woken Joseph to bind up his hand.

"I felt such a silly ass when I'd knocked it over," said Potts. "I saw this face standing back from the door as I thought and waiting to stab me or sandbag me as I went out. I suppose my mind was running on spies, and I thought the only thing to do was to hit out at once when he didn't answer me. I never had such a shock in my life as when it crashed over, and, by George, I thought I'd broken every bone in my hand."

Before taking leave of Potts, who would presently be commanding the *Imogen* on the Tigris, two more stories of him must be told. One day in the Legation he was demonstrating his strength by spinning Goodhart like a teetotum on the Chancery table with one hand, when Sir Francis came in and said with a trace of disapproval that the Chancery was not the place for games. However, presently Sir Francis himself was lured into showing some trick of

picking up a coin from the floor. Thereupon Potts with a brimming glass of water on his head picked up with his teeth a handkerchief from the floor. Just as he was finished without spilling a drop amid applause, Venizelos came into the Chancery and stood waiting while the British Minister with his Counsellor and his Secretaries watched Potts's trick, unaware of the entry of the Greek Prime Minister.

In 1918 Potts was torpedoed in the *Sonia*, which sank in two and a half minutes giving him only just time to get off. It was seven minutes to eleven at night when he entered the water. After swimming for a long time he felt frightened and decided to float. He floated about until noon the following day when he sighted three figures on a raft. Potts swam toward them and recognized his paymaster and one of the stokers, but the third figure, a completely bald and naked man was unknown to him. When he was safe on the raft he began to feel a little hysterical after his ordeal and to fancy that the bald and naked man was a ghost. Then the bald man spoke in an embarrassed voice:

"I don't think you know me, sir. But I'm your engineer."

"My engineer?" Potts gasped.

"Yes, sir, but when we were struck I lost my wig, and in the confusion I was unable to recover it. So I must ask you to excuse me, sir."

They spent two days and nights on that raft before they were rescued. However, neither the ordeal nor the shock of his wigless engineer aged Potts, for when I saw him again the other day he had not changed in fifteen years, but was still the great genial Punch of a man I had last seen at the British School in Athens.

Pleasant though it was for me up at the British School with the quiet garden for my own, with freedom from dust

THE BRITISH SCHOOL

and that radiant view over Athens now softened by autumnal airs to a landscape of such luminous colour as dreams in the background of an Umbrian painter, my remoteness was for Tucker a sad penance, and indeed that long drive when the flaccid horse would walk slowly up through the untidy half-made streets of the growing city was a wearisome business. Tucker was worked very hard, for, except the card index, all the clerical work was in his hands, and as I sometimes used to dictate to him till four in the morning the clerical work was not light. For a picture of absolute fatigue I always have one of Tucker as he used to bang away at his typewriter half asleep, while I drove him on with report after report of events, incidents, and individuals, most of which were ultimately a waste of time and energy.

"We can't go on much longer like this, Captain Z," he used to groan. "We must have a car of our own."

One day, when I was complaining to Erskine about the impossibility of trying to run a show like ours without a car, he offered to lend us his Sunbeam, provided we would take on Markham his chauffeur, and buy the car later on for £400. V agreed with me that it was imperative for us to have a car, but he did not hold out much hope of getting the expense sanctioned by London. However, Tucker and I set our minds on that Sunbeam, and for a month we hardly wrote a report without stressing the wonderful might-have-beens if we had only possessed a car of our own.

"I may point out that if we had had a car we could have verified the existence of this alleged signalling station. . . . I may point out that if we had had a car we should have been able to intercept the man before he left for Larissa. . . . I may point out that if we had had a car much valuable time would have been saved. . . ." And so on and so on.

"Well, if we can't have a car," Tucker said to me at last, "we must have a centre for work more conveniently placed than this blessed school. Look at this list of inquiries

that came in from V this morning. It's all very well for old Weir to have the men in his house, but look at the time it wastes if I have to go dragging down there every time I want an inquiry made."

I have not mentioned old Weir yet. In times of peace he had been for many years one of the chief couriers in Athens, and I suppose he knew as much as any man has ever known about getting to places in Greece on and off the beaten track. He must at this date have been approaching seventy, a small man with a big grey moustache, apple cheeks, and bright sly little eyes. His father had been an Ulsterman, and Weir himself was just such a one as you might see hanging about in the muddy market-place of some small town in Northern Ireland or gloating over the beat of the Orange drums on the melancholy anniversary of Boyne, and it was fantastically surprising to hear from his lips when speaking English a strong Greek accent instead of the Ulster brogue. It was fantastic, too, to find that, while retaining all that harsh Ulster bigotry, he had added to it some of the darker superstitions of the Levant. Not that the latter was without its comic side. Tucker between whom and Weir was enmity came to me once, almost in tears, to say Clarence had just told him that Weir had set up a wax image of him in his bedroom, into which he was sticking pins and which he was shortly going to melt before the fire.

"But you don't surely think he has enough wax to melt *you* away, Tucker?" I laughed.

"Well, of course I know it's all nonsense," said my plump lieutenant, "but seriously, Captain Z, it gives me the creeps to think of that dirty old blackguard sticking pins into a wax image of me, and as a matter of fact I did have a funny kind of sharp pain in my arm when I woke up this morning. I know it's nonsense, but it gets on anybody's nerves."

THE BRITISH SCHOOL

Not wishing to have the organization wrecked so soon by internal dissension, I sent for Clarence.

"Clarence, what's all this rubbish you've been telling Tucker about Weir making a wax image of him?"

Clarence loured portentously.

"It's gawd's truth, Skipper, what I've been telling Mr. Tucker. He had six pins stuck in when I last see it, and he said if he couldn't make Tucker feel shoots all through his limbs he was going to melt him in front of the stove and see if he couldn't make the B take to his bed for good."

The notion of a wax image of Tucker slowly dissolving in fire as a cake of pink soap slowly dissolves in water was too much for proper gravity.

"Oh, it's all very well for you to laugh, Captain Z, and I know it's all tommy rot," said Tucker, his lips turning down plaintively beneath that big blond moustache. "But I don't like the idea of it, and I wish you'd speak to the old savage."

"And that's not all he's done, Skipper," Clarence leaned over to breathe hoarsely in my ear. "He's been to see a witch about getting a curse put on Mr. Tucker."

"You never told me that, Clarence," said Tucker anxiously.

"Well, I didn't want to scare you too much," Clarence explained with unctuous and kindly patronage before he continued his horrific revelations of old Weir's sorcery. "And in the corner of his bedroom he's got an image behind a curtain with a lamp burning in front of it, and they say he feeds this image with cheese and sugar and sits muttering to it when he's putting curses on people."

"Image of what?" I asked.

Clarence shrugged his shoulders reproachfully as if to imply that I must not expect even him to be able to find out everything.

"He hasn't been making any images of me and sticking

pins into them, has he?" I asked. "Perhaps that's why my leg has been so bad lately. Well, Tucker, the only thing for you to do is to make an image of old Weir and set light to his moustache."

Tucker shook his head. In spite of his fair plump cheeks and genial Cockney manner the old wives' tales of Constantinople were a part of his mind. The West in him recognized my right to laugh, but the Levant in him wished I would not be quite so recklessly amused.

The quarrel between Weir and Tucker had been of long standing, and I never succeeded in reaching the certain cause of it. They had both been employed by V to recruit agents for Turkey, and Weir may have fancied that Tucker had got the better of him in some financial transaction, or that Tucker had stolen some of the credit to which he was himself entitled, for from what I could discover the majority of the more valuable agents had been recruited by Weir.

Those agents became a problem to V. There were about half a dozen, most of whom had made two or three successful journeys into and out of Turkey. They had been promised permanent work afterwards at Gallipoli and some of them had been sent up there to do contre-espionage work for Deedes. However, when suspicion was cast on the canteens run by X—* and X— himself was deported to Malta they had all been sent back to Athens. They were still on V's hands and drawing a monthly salary for doing nothing, because of course they were by now perfectly useless as secret agents in Turkey or anywhere else. In addition to these unemployed agents there was the future of Weir himself to consider, for it was no longer profitable to use him as a recruiting agent. For a while Liebig was able to suppose that they were providing him with information, and for some of the hotch-potch I inherited with an untrained digestion Weir and his band were responsible.

* See *Gallipoli Memories*, pp. 193-4.

THE BRITISH SCHOOL

When in mid-October Liebig departed for Salonica V handed them all over to me. I did not guess at the time what a useless and expensive incubus Weir and his agents were likely to prove ; but, even if I had, it would have been impossible for me to refuse their services. Each of them was convinced that by making two or three journeys through Turkey at a time when there was very little risk about such a mission he had laid the British Government under a debt, and as for old Weir himself he was as proud of them as if he had begotten the lot. From what I could gather they had spent the last two months gossiping all day in Weir's house, for the use of which he had been allowed to charge an extra hundred and fifty drachmas on top of his own salary of five hundred. In fact Weir and his merry men represented a perpetual charge on the organization of over one hundred pounds a month which in those early days was a severe tax upon our not too plentiful resources.

Fortunately it became feasible at last to supply them with work in connexion with the passport bureau which was started later on in the Legation.

Scares about the future were rife toward the close of 1915, and one of the most persistent rumours was that the Germans intended to concentrate the whole force of the Turkish Empire upon an invasion of Egypt, after first driving the British forces on Gallipoli into the sea.

The authorities in Egypt began to get nervous about the ease with which possible agitators and spies were passing to and fro between Alexandria and the Piræus. The High Commissioner had asked if anything could be done in Athens to regulate the passenger traffic, and one day in December Wace took me aside in the hall of the Legation to propose what he hoped might be a helpful plan and give him something to do in the spare time he had after deciphering and enciphering telegrams. The suggestion was that he should examine personally all the applicants for passports to

Egypt, and if he was not satisfied with the *bona fides* of the intending traveller that he should be empowered to notify the British Consuls that visas should not be granted. I was to supply him with the information he wanted about doubtful cases and to provide him with a clerical assistant. I must stress the importance of Wace's practical and simple suggestion, since from it sprang the whole of that great system of passport control round the world which made life hideous for travellers during the war, continued to do so for so long afterward, and has not been even yet relaxed. Practical and simple though Wace's suggestion may sound, it was in effect a revolutionary step, because it took away from Consuls what was almost their *raison d'être*; and we were lucky to have a Minister like Sir Francis Elliot, who was not prepared to sacrifice everything to preserve the official dignity of Consuls.

"In other words I am to tell the Consuls in my zone that they have no right or power to visé a passport without your permission, Mackenzie?" he said to me dryly.

"No, sir, not quite that," I said. "I wasn't proposing that we should do anything at present except about passports for Egypt, and after all we have been asked to exercise special care before granting visas for Egypt. Few Consuls have the necessary equipment to make proper inquiries before granting visas for Egypt, and I think it is putting too much responsibility on them. Besides, sir, it seems to me that the Consul at the Piræus might justifiably resent having to refer all applications to the Legation, unless Consuls in Crete, Mytilene, Corfu, and everywhere else are instructed to do the same."

"Well, I suppose if I think it wise I can make this rule," said Sir Francis.

"If the Commercial Department of the Legation can exercise absolute control over exports and imports between Egypt and Greece, why may not the Legation institute a

department for controlling travel? The hardship of referring all applicants to Athens is not real, because travellers to Egypt, except from Crete, must come to the Piræus."

Here I must digress for a moment to say that the origin of the Commercial Department, which by this date had acquired an official and highly respectable exterior, had only started as a small branch of the V Bureau where Lieut. A. Hill, R.N.V.R., an employee of the Standard Oil Company in time of peace, had worked on the subject of benzene and petroleum supplies. He kept a Contraband Black List which was later incorporated in the Legation Black List, and with the appointment of Mr. Waugh* as Commercial Attaché and Commander Sells as Naval Attaché, Lieut. Hill moved from Academy Street into the Legation. By this date the Commercial Department had nothing whatever to do with the V Bureau except that it was well financed by the C organization in London and received the money through V. It is too soon to examine and analyse for the reader the lack of co-ordination of Intelligence which, conspicuous elsewhere, was perhaps more conspicuous in the Mediterranean than anywhere else. What may be called without exaggeration the drama of departmental strife will gradually unfold itself during these memories and under Mr. Waugh, who was a doughty champion of the privileges of his Consular order, the Commercial Department of the British Legation fought as hard as any to resist the centralizing policy which I conceived to be the only effective one.

The first skirmish on behalf of centralization was won when Sir Francis Elliot agreed to this experiment in passport control. There was, however, no separate room available for Wace in the Legation, and he used to sit at a table in one of the corridors, from which a long trail of waiting applicants sometimes stretched right across the marble

* Sir A. T. Waugh, K.C.M.G., H.B.M.'s Consul-General at Constantinople.

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

entrance hall and even out into the street, each one of whom would have to endure a long examination about his reasons for going to Egypt, after which he would have to leave his passport for inquiries to be made about him and come back three days later to see if his application had been granted, when the consular visé was granted by Mr. Norcup at the Piræus. This crowd of applicants became a nuisance. The staff of the Legation on its way to the Chancery found their odour almost overwhelming. Early in 1916 an opportunity arose to acquire commodious premises next door for what presently became the Intelligence Department of the British Legation, and not the least of its triumphs was the extraction of 200 francs a month from the Foreign Office toward the rent of these premises.

CHAPTER X

THE ENTRY OF BULGARIA

WHEN on August 23rd, 1915, Venizelos at last took the helm to which the people of Greece had called him at the Elections of June 13th he found the ship of state steering an uncertain course among the shallows of party strife. The glass was falling, and there was every indication of a storm from the Near East. He and King Constantine were in disagreement, not merely how to get sailing room to escape an ugly lee shore, but even more completely over what hinterland lay beyond that lee shore. To try his seamanship still further Venizelos only possessed inaccurate and contradictory charts of the European situation. He did not know, for instance, that two days ago the British Government had assented against its better judgment to that futile offensive called the Battle of Loos. He did not know that a political quarrel in Paris between clerical and anti-clerical generals had already made the Salonica Expedition a possibility. He did not know that there was already a strong body of opinion in Great Britain which favoured the speedy abandonment of the expedition to force the Dardanelles. He did not know the extent to which the King was involved with Germany; but he suspected rightly or wrongly grave commitments, and for that suspicion the King, the late Cabinet, and the General Staff had only their own lack of frankness to blame. One thing, however, he did know by faith more than by reason, which was that, somehow, whatever diplomatic mistakes were still to be made, whatever military follies were still to be

perpetrated, whatever naval disappointments were still to be endured, the powers of the Entente *must* ultimately win the War. In this faith, careless of his own political life, he set the ship's course and, contemptuous of the timid mariners who cried out to run the vessel ashore, he trimmed his sails to ride out the storm. He was so confident that the ship would not sink in those deeper waters which he meant to reach that he could not accept as a conceivable alternative the plan of allowing her to rot high and dry upon a safe beach.

By the end of August there were reports already of a great Austro-German concentration based on Breslau and directed against Serbia. Venizelos telegraphed to Nicolas Theotokis, the Greek Minister in Berlin, instructing him to warn the Imperial Government that if the *rapprochement* between Bulgaria and the Central Empires were designed to ensure the Austro-German forces a free passage through Bulgaria Greece would not be alarmed, but that if it portended an attack by Bulgaria on Serbia Greece would discard her neutrality. This vitally important telegram (Number 32 in the Greek White Book) is usually ignored by the apologists for King Constantine, for it invites the awkward question whether the King had privately given the German Government a contrary assurance. Certainly it evoked from Germany no more than indifference, an indifference so strange as to cause suspicion. Anyway, on September 14th the Greek General Staff presented to the Government a warning against the danger of intervention and a damaging criticism of the military strength of Serbia. Venizelos seems to have been untouched by that brief optimism about the future of the Dardanelles Expedition which had swept over this theatre during the previous week when it was believed that the French were sending four new Divisions to operate under General Sarrail on the Asiatic side of the Straits. For him the attitude of Bulgaria was at

THE ENTRY OF BULGARIA

this moment more urgent than the future of the Dardanelles Expedition. With the progress of the war before us in the printed page we can see that what at the time seemed the unjustifiable and almost insensate refusal of Mr. Churchill and Sir Ian Hamilton to face facts and abandon their belief in the power of Gallipoli to solve the problem of the war's direction was the far-sighted and the correct point of view. If the Allied offensive in France had been renounced and if any signs had been evinced of a determination to send Eastward every available man and gun not actually wanted for defence in the West, Bulgaria would probably have paused. The failure at Suvla destroyed the last faint hope of persuading her to join the Allies ; but it was only when the failure at Suvla had been followed by those weeks of inaction that she decided to throw in her lot with Germany. She did not even pay that Allied offensive in Artois and Champagne the compliment of waiting to see what became of it.

With his conviction that it was vital for Greece to do all she could to prevent Bulgaria's overwhelming of Serbia M. Venizelos was resolved to carry into effect the threat to Germany in his telegram of September 3rd. On the 21st it was officially notified to the Greek Government that a Turko-Bulgarian agreement had been reached by which Turkey ceded to Bulgaria the Dedeagatch railway, and that Bulgaria had ordered a general mobilization. Venizelos at once instructed General Danglis, his Minister for War, to draw up a mobilization order for Greece to be ready for the King to sign at half-past six that afternoon. At five o'clock he was to be at Tatoi himself in order to discuss the situation with His Majesty. The Prime Minister's confidence in the Royal willingness to mobilize was not misplaced. Mobilization would be a help not a hindrance to the Royal policy : it might even lead to the benefit of martial law throughout the country. But when Venizelos spoke of war

the King was less enthusiastic. The rest of this momentous audience may be told in the words of Venizelos, though the official English translation flatters the eloquence of the great Cretan less than a schoolboy's crib flatters that of Demosthenes. The narrative is taken from the tremendous speech made to the Greek Chamber two years later on August 26th, 1917:

"The King did not say, of course, that we were under no obligation to go to the assistance of Serbia; he did not dare to say that to me, because he knew very well the conditions under which the Treaty was signed and how clear was our obligation to go to the assistance of Serbia even in a purely European war; but he said to me: 'You know, I don't want to help Serbia, because Germany will win, and I don't want to be beaten.'

"I developed first of all the military aspect of the question. I then drew his attention to the local conditions, the geographical position of Greece, and the lack of means of communication in the Balkans; and I supported my conviction, or at least my confident expectation, that if we attacked the Bulgarians, while they were proposing to attack the Serbians on one front, there was every probability, with the excellent *moral* of the Greek Army and the inferior *moral* of the Bulgarians after their recent defeat that our attack might succeed, and that we might even hope to reach the Bulgarian capital.

"I reminded him of the fact, of which he was already aware, that Bulgaria had only 400 rounds to each gun, which were not even sufficient for a single serious engagement under modern conditions, so that if we could succeed in delaying the defeat of Serbia for only one month we might hope to reach Sofia without serious resistance. I also told the King that even if we did not succeed in inflicting a definite defeat on Bulgaria in time, we should nevertheless be able to keep in touch with the Serbian Army, and,

THE ENTRY OF BULGARIA

retreating with them in face of superior German pressure, we should reach a position, extending in general lines from the frontiers of Eastern Macedonia through the Valley of Strumnitsa to Krivolak and Tetovo, beyond which an Austro-German advance was for mechanical reasons absolutely impossible. You know, Gentlemen, the necessity of supplies in modern warfare. A single line of railway, like those on the Balkan front, is incapable of serving an army of more than 120 or 130 thousand men. Taking this into consideration, it was impossible for Germany and Austria to concentrate and supply on that front a force even two-thirds as strong as our own, much less stronger than our own in combination with the Serbian Army and the English and French forces which would gradually arrive. You will ask why they would be only capable of supplying an army less by one-third than our own, while we would have greater possibilities of supply. The answer is that the Bulgarian Army depended on one railway, the Vardar line, and perhaps a second line, the railway from Sofia to Philippopolis, whereas we had on the same front three lines of railway, or one more than they. But there is a further point: the enemy's base of supply was Budapest, whereas our base was at Salonica: and at that time, as you will remember, the achievements of the submarine war were quite insignificant, and the distance from our base at Salonica, to the line which I fixed as that on which the Serbian Army and our own might have had to retreat, was much less than the distance to Budapest, while at the same time it was possible to build several good roads leading directly to our front, by means of which the Greek and Serbian armies could be kept well supplied.

"Accordingly I told the King that even if Germany had five million men at her disposal on other fronts she would not be able to bring them here; consequently the fear of a local defeat was not justified; and there was no fear of our

meeting the fate of Belgium, with which the General Staff were menacing public opinion. But the military argument was unfortunately without effect : I was not met by arguments, but the *leit-motif* was always the same : ' I don't want to fight, we shall be beaten by Germany, I don't want to fight.'

" I was then obliged to apply heroic remedies—to bring forward my heavy artillery : So I said : ' Your Majesty, having failed to persuade you, I am very sorry, but it is my duty, as representing at the present moment the sovereignty of the people, to tell you that this time you have no right to differ from me. By the elections of May 31 (June 13) the people have approved my policy and given me their confidence ; and the electorate knew that the foundation of my policy was that we should not allow Bulgaria to crush Serbia and expand overmuch so as to crush us to-morrow. At this point therefore you cannot depart from this policy : unless of course you are determined to set aside the Constitution, in which case you must say so clearly, abrogating the Constitution and assuming full responsibility by a Royal Decree.'

" He said : ' You know I recognize that I am bound to obey the popular verdict when it is a question of the internal affairs of the country ; but when it is a question of foreign affairs, great international questions, I think that so long as I believe a thing is right or not right, I must insist upon its being done or not being done, because I am responsible before God.'

" You can imagine the impression produced by these words. I remember that a feeling of distress overcame me and with clasped hands and a melancholy movement of the head I said : ' Alas, this is the theory of monarchy by the Grace of God, unhappy Greece ! ' And after a little I said to the King that in the circumstances of the time I could not undertake a fight for the Constitution—' after calling

THE ENTRY OF BULGARIA

your Majesty's attention I feel I must offer my resignation, which I beg you to accept.'

"The King said to me: 'How can you possibly resign now? If the Bulgarian mobilization was ordered yesterday? In these circumstances, as you know, we mustn't delay even twenty-four hours.'

"'I have no means of knowing,' I answered, 'that the policy of my successors will be one of mobilization. Such I believe it will be, because even if you abandon Serbia, you don't know what may happen, so long at least as you fail to make sure that Bulgaria does not attack you first. But I cannot impose a policy on my successors. I cannot take such a serious step. Summon immediately the Government which is to succeed me, even for the present with only four Ministers and of course the Minister for War, summon it at once this evening to take the oath, and publish the decree for mobilization. I cannot sign such a decree after submitting my resignation.'

"Then he said to me: 'After all, we can't be certain that Bulgaria will attack Serbia. Bulgaria may maintain an armed neutrality'—you remember that this was reported at the time—'and it is quite possible that she will never attack Serbia at all, in which case our difference is resolved and you can remain in office and continue to carry out your policy.' So he persuaded me to remain in office and to sign the Decree of Mobilization, although, as was subsequently proved, he had already given the Kaiser every assurance that he had no intention of fighting Germany's allies.

"In the course of the discussion, however, of the assistance of Serbia, there arose the question which had troubled the General Staff, who maintained that Serbia could not produce the 150,000 soldiers for the war against Bulgaria, as she was obliged to by the terms of the Military Convention. Without having inquired at all whether such an obligation really existed, I said to the King: 'Don't you

think it would be possible, in order to dispose of that argument, and still more in order substantially to increase our own and Serbia's military strength, to ask for French and English reinforcements? They might be able to find us the 150,000 bayonets. Don't you think we ought to ask them? Because if they can, with the 200,000 Serbians and our own 150,000 we should then number 500,000 bayonets, and the Bulgarians and Austro-Germans cannot keep half that number supplied against us.' The King said: 'Certainly, but they must send home-troops and not Colonials.'

"I do not tell you this, gentlemen, in order to be able to assert that the King at that moment consented, if the French and English gave us 150,000 first line troops, to abandon neutrality. The man was determined in any circumstances not to fight. But when he found himself faced by my question he did not think he was justified in giving me a direct negative."

Venizelos left Tatoï just as General Danglis was arriving with the mobilization order. He returned to Athens and telephoned at seven o'clock for the Ministers of the Entente to visit him immediately. He told them that the mobilization order would be published that very evening and asked them if in the event of Greece's declaring war upon Bulgaria their Governments were ready to send the 150,000 troops which by the terms of the Greek Treaty with Serbia the latter was obliged to contribute. The Ministers retired to send urgent telegrams to their respective Governments, and a quarter of an hour later M. Mercati, the Master of the King's Household, arrived at the Ministry with a message from His Majesty to ask Venizelos not to make any *démarche* to the Entente. The Prime Minister replied that the *démarche* had been made.

To continue with the narrative of M. Venizelos :

THE ENTRY OF BULGARIA

“After forty-eight hours came the reply of the Powers that they were willing to supply the required fighting force of home troops, and they even fixed the time within which this force would arrive. I communicated this answer to the King, who said: ‘Please tell the Ministers that so long as Bulgaria does not attack Serbia and does not thereby create the situation which obliges us to abandon our neutrality, these forces (the preparation for which had begun immediately) must not be dispatched, for their arrival on Greek soil would constitute a breach of our neutrality, it still being possible that Bulgaria will not attack Serbia.’

“I conveyed the King’s wishes to the Ministers, who telegraphed accordingly. They returned, however, with a fresh answer from the Powers to the effect that they had ordered the departure of these troops, which were already on their way to Greece. (It should be noted that they had started from close at hand—from Mudros and Marseilles.) ‘Having once informed us,’ said the Powers, ‘that your policy is to counter-attack Bulgaria and take your place as our ally in the event of Bulgaria attacking Serbia, we do not see why the arrival of these reinforcements should be delayed; we are certain that Bulgaria will not remain in a state of armed neutrality, but will attack Serbia, and you will then have reason to thank us, for you will have your reinforcements ready instead of having to wait for them. In this respect we undertake full responsibility.’

“I told them that this statement was very reasonable, and that I could not deny I liked it very much, but that the question was one of our formal neutrality, at any rate up to the moment when the attack took place: ‘Consequently I must inform you that I am obliged to protest against the disembarkation of these forces, as this step constitutes a breach of our neutrality.’

“‘Very well,’ they said, ‘very well: you will protest,

but we hope that your attitude will not be hostile but friendly.'

" 'Most friendly,' I replied. 'Not only will you not find yourselves in a hostile place, but after making our protest we will afford you all possible facilities for disembarkation, quartering and so forth.'

"I saw the King and informed him of all this. 'That is all right,' he said, 'only I must beg that in any case your protest may be emphatic.' 'Certainly,' I answered, 'it shall be emphatic up to a certain point, for taking into consideration what is behind it it cannot be so very emphatic; but I will try to make it as emphatic as is permissible in the circumstances, and at the same time serious.' "

This was on September 24th. Two days later the offensive in the West was to be launched. General Joffre was resisting the dispatch of a single soldier to the East. General Sarraill was still contesting in Paris the offer of a subordinate command. In order to do something to impress the Balkans Sir Ian Hamilton was told on September 26th that instead of receiving four new French and two new British Divisions he was to surrender from his already too greatly depleted force one French and one British Division for Salonica. On September 28th Sir Edward Grey announced to a House of Commons, which throughout the war was apt to mistake an almost servile lack of judgment for patriotism, that so far from being disturbed by the Bulgarian mobilization His Majesty's Government desired to express the warm sympathy of Great Britain for legitimate Bulgarian aspirations, and he added that the policy of the Entente was still to bring about a Balkan agreement based upon territorial concessions. This statement was received with applause. Yet on the following day the French Consul visited General Moschopoulos, the Military

THE ENTRY OF BULGARIA

Governor at Salonica, to announce the immediate arrival of French troops; and on September 30th, the day after, a telegram from the Acting British Consul in Salonica to Athens informed Sir Francis Elliot that General Hamilton with several officers had landed in Salonica and were measuring the harbour. He asked for instructions, adding that the Greek garrison had not up till the moment of telegraphing fired upon them.

I happened to be in the Legation when this telegram was deciphered, and the picture of the Chancery that morning as I recapture it after fifteen years is of a disturbed ants' nest. It was the first time I had seen Sir Francis really excited, and I was impressed by the flush upon that thin grey intellectual face, by the 'damns' upon those finely cut lips, and by the indignant waving of the bunch of blue and white papers in his hand. It was supposed at first that General Hamilton was Sir Ian himself, and it was some time before he was revealed to be a Sapper Brigadier entrusted with the job of surveying the place for the disembarkation of the Tenth Division under Lieut.-General Sir Bryan Mahon, which had evacuated Suvla and was now at Mudros waiting to sail.

Sir Edward Grey's speech in the House of Commons was made with the most pacific intention; but his allusion to those territorial concessions by Serbia and Greece to Bulgaria had been unfortunate, and the reported enthusiasm with which his speech had been received in the House of Commons created a bad impression of British sincerity. It was not generally understood that these ardent expressions of optimism, which to people in Greece appeared too fatuous even for Parliamentary eloquence, were applauded out of patriotic duty in the same way as immense votes of credit were passed in a minute without discussion. To the people of Greece that announcement of Sir Edward Grey's followed by the landing of Allied

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

troops at Salonica meant that the Entente had determined to compel Greece to surrender Cavalla to the Bulgarians. Indeed this was believed in Sofia and according to Colonel Napier in his book *A Military Attaché in the Balkans* the Bulgarian papers of October 2nd declared that the object of the Salonica landing was to compel Serbia and Greece to make territorial concessions. The task of the German propagandists was becoming a sinecure in the Balkans.

At the end of September Serbia had asked to be allowed to attack the Bulgars before their mobilization was completed, but that reasonable and practicable request had been refused by the Entente. In connexion with this I find among the few odds and ends of papers which have survived those last months of 1915 a pathetic relic in the shape of the rough draft of a telegram to be sent by Colonel Cuninghame. He had asked me to go round to his room at the Angleterre, and when I arrived he said :

“Look here, you’re supposed to know something about the English language. See if you can put together a telegram with me which will be understood by those muddlers at home.”

The draft is written out in my hand in pencil, with so many deletions and alterations eloquent of the will we both had to make it convincing as to be almost illegible. Indeed, I cannot be sure now that I have read the date rightly, but it is almost certainly the second of October.

Athens. 2nd (?) October, 1915.

*Following from Military Attaché
Reference to Sofia telegram*

Whatever is said about the Bulgarian mobilization applies with equal force to Greeks. The latter in spite of all obstacles

THE ENTRY OF BULGARIA

of German propaganda have determined to help Serbia. They have mobilized for this express purpose and if asked to demobilize will assuredly be unwilling to re-mobilize later for our benefit.

If Serbs attack now they will only have part of Bulgarian Army against them owing to need watching Greece and Roumania. If they wait for completion Greek mobilization it will give time for Austro-Germans and Turks to bring up help. If they wait further for Anglo-French concentration that concentration must be strong enough to counterbalance Austro-German and Turkish help.

The Greeks mobilized at our instigation on our express promise of 150,000 men to take the place of Serbs. In Greek opinion honour and policy alike bind us to Greece, and if our troops now on their way or others are to be used in Bulgarian interests England in Balkan opinion will stand as at the beginning of the war Germany stood in European opinion with regard to Belgium.

I cannot strongly enough emphasize the vital importance at this immediate moment of concerted action between the Greeks and the Serbs, and between the Allies, Greeks and Serbs from a military point of view. The King will be impressed at this moment by the production of a considered plan of military operations which will be the best practical evidence of our serious intentions.

Presumably the Sofia telegram on which the above is a comment had advocated a demobilization by Greece in order to soothe the ruffled feelings of Bulgaria, and evidently there had also been a definite suggestion to use our troops then on the way to Salonica as a threat to Serbia in order to allow the Bulgarians to occupy Macedonia at once.

So, there was some reason for the nervous and excitable condition of M. Venizelos to which Sir Francis Elliot alludes

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

in a telegram of October 2nd to Sir Edward Grey, quoted in *Twenty Five Years* :

I read to M. Venizelos this morning paraphrases of your telegrams of 1st October, and left them with him to show the King. My French colleague, who was with me, read him similar telegram, but nothing so categorical as your telegram. M. Venizelos was pleased, but he is in a most nervous and excitable condition, and news that the French had arrived at Salonica made him even more intractable than he had been yesterday. Before consenting to their disembarkation without more than a protest, he required from French Minister a declaration of reason for their coming, which he will give in terms of one of the telegrams he received from Paris, and, further, a declaration to the following effect :

“On occasion of passage of Allied troops through Salonica French Government declare they have no intention of encroaching on sovereign rights of Greece or of interfering in administration of the country.”

M. Venizelos said that wherever we went we acted as if the place belonged to us, and he must safeguard himself against this being done in Salonica. A telegram which was brought to him, and to which I shall devote another telegram, added fuel to the fire. My French colleague said that he could not make required declaration without instructions, but that he would telegraph for them, and M. Venizelos was eventually brought to say he would send instructions that troops were to be allowed to land under protest to-morrow, by which time he was assured reply of French Government would have arrived. He also laid stress on the necessity of the troops doing no more than pass through Salonica and Greek territory.

The suspicion of us, which has now become ingrained in all classes of population, has actually laid hold of M. Venizelos himself.

Before our troops arrive off Salonica I shall be required to

THE ENTRY OF BULGARIA

make a similar declaration, and I request authority to do so.

With regard to officers at Salonica, M. Venizelos admitted that I had spoken to him generally of their being sent, but said he had expected to be informed of their arrival beforehand—an expectation which I confess I shared with him.

His Excellency would express no definite opinion on your telegrams until he has seen the King this afternoon.

The urbanity of phrase does not quite conceal an underlying irritation at the clumsiness with which the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs was handling a delicate business. The trouble was that Sir Edward Grey had himself been misled by his military advisers. On September 22nd he had actually telegraphed to Sir Francis Elliot :

My personal impression is that it is not possible for us to send a military force to Greece immediately, but that it might not be ruled out as impossible later on. . . . I do not believe there is a prospect of Austria and Germany being able to detach large forces to attack Serbia, and the situation is likely to improve.

It was that great offensive in Artois and Champagne which was to relieve the situation in the Balkans. Actually at a cost of 300,000 casualties it captured some guns, some prisoners, and some yards of ground, and it was entirely without effect on the Austro-German determination to obliterate Serbia. The unjustifiable optimism of his military advisers gave Sir Edward Grey time to worry over the problem of reconciling a landing at Salonica with the British protest against the violation of Belgian neutrality in 1914. Could he have devoted less attention to form and more attention to fact, he might have avoided that useless flattery of Bulgaria in the House of Commons on September 28th, which was in the circumstances really nothing more

than a display of good manners. However, the burden of defending the action of the Allies in landing at Salonica was soon taken from Sir Edward Grey's shoulders, for it became evident almost at once that the French regarded Salonica as their business. They, being less concerned with the niceties of International Law than with the possible aggrandisement of France in the Near East, did not pretend to academic justification for any action they took.

The dispatch of troops from the Dardanelles to Salonica had a disastrous effect upon King Constantine. Apart from the wound to his pride his soldierly ideas were shocked by the implications of such a transference, which could only foreshadow a complete abandonment of the attempt to force the Straits. He had now to contemplate the release of Turkish troops to help the Bulgarians, and the prospect was disquieting. If his unwillingness to go to war against the Central Powers had been acute before, it was much more acute now. At the same time he could not bring himself to say publicly that nothing would induce him to fight Bulgaria if to fight Bulgaria meant fighting Germany, and he authorized Venizelos to publish a *communiqué* that he was in agreement with his Government not merely over mobilization, but also over future policy. On October 4th the Chamber met to discuss this policy, and at four o'clock of the morning of the next day the Chamber endorsed the policy of the President of the Council by 46 votes. In the course of that debate Theotokis, one of the Deputies from Corfu and a fanatical partisan of Germany, asked what would happen if the Greek troops encountered German troops as well as Allied troops.

"The enemies of our friends will be our enemies," Venizelos replied amid cheers.

This was too much for King Constantine, who sent for the Prime Minister and demanded his resignation.

We may decide now that Venizelos blundered in allowing

THE ENTRY OF BULGARIA

himself to be jockeyed out of his position or to preserve an earlier metaphorical sequence to be compelled to surrender the wheel and sent below ; but it was not a favourable moment for cool and deliberate action. The excitement in Athens was so tense that even now I can still recall the almost physical effect of the overcharged air. During these days civil war was imaginable, and at such a moment this would have been beyond the courage of the most insensate egoist to provoke. On October 2nd the Bulgarian troops were reported to be massing along the Serbian frontier, the Austro-German invaders to be surging across the Danube. On October 4th the Russian ultimatum to Bulgaria had been delivered. On October 5th the 150,000 troops promised by the Allies had turned out to be no more than 20,000. In despair Venizelos resigned, and nearly twelve months were to pass before he was again to give a lead to his country. On October 6th Sir Edward Grey telegraphed to Sir Francis Elliot :

The resignation of M. Venizelos after we have sent troops to Salonica at his request has placed us in a very difficult position, which must be cleared up.

Jane Austen herself invented nothing better than that for Mrs. Dashwood, nor Meredith for Sir Willoughby Patterne.

On October 7th a terrific thunderstorm accompanied by a shrieking wind and torrential rain broke over Athens, and a few sentences extracted from a letter written while the lightning was turning blue my room at the British School, while the thunder was crashing peal upon peal almost without an interval of silence, and while Joseph deprived of Stavro's company by the mobilization stood quaking in a pair of carpet slippers by the door, may reveal the mood we were most of us in :

The situation is desperate. The Germans have crossed the

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

Danube at two points. The Bulgarians will attack the Serbian flank. Greece is paralysed with fear . . . it looks as if we may have to leave at any moment . . . we are as near to ruin at this moment as ever during the war . . . the Bulgarians may attack our positions in Gallipoli, and a really dreadful disaster is imaginable. Our people at the Dardanelles may be massacred, and yet these bloody optimists at home prattle of all going well . . . you can absolutely smell the lightning.

When the thunderstorm passed I walked down into the city through rain-washed streets. In the sunset battalions of khaki-clad troops soaked to the skin were marching toward the Piræus. Presently I met Major Staichos, the son-in-law of General Dousmanis. He was in service kit and told me he was on the way to Salonica. I forget what I said to him; but I remember very clearly what he said to me and the expression on his face when he said it, half contemptuous, half sympathetic, and the wild yellow light among the clouds dissolving overhead, and the shimmer of the puddles, and the freshness in the evening air.

"You must not place any hopes upon this mobilization, my friend. It means nothing . . . absolutely nothing. But it is useful for us."

"You won't fight Bulgaria?"

Major Staichos smiled, shook hands, saluted, and passed quickly on.

Knowing him to be as well-informed as anybody about the inner counsels of the Greek General Staff, I ceased from that moment to believe that there was any likelihood of Greece's entering the war upon our side unless the success of our arms should be so conspicuous as to make it impossible even for King Constantine to thwart the national will.

But this was not the opinion of others. For the next

year amateur diplomats of various nationalities were to wander out to Athens, each of them venturing to suppose that his persuasive eloquence would effect a change of heart in the elusive monarch. None of them did any harm until a French deputy called Bénazet, who arrived in October, 1916. He, however, did more than enough to make up for the negligibleness of his predecessors.

The first to arrive was Mr. Walter Harris, the *Times* correspondent in Morocco. He was reported to have a wonderful way with Royalty. It would appear that he had only to speak to a King and that King would follow him anywhere. If anybody could persuade King Constantine to fly in the face of military facts and perch upon the finger of the Entente, it was he. Thus were we assured. I never heard who was responsible for the plan of sending out Mr. Harris to charm the King of the Hellenes into an obliging mood. I met him at lunch and found his tales of Morocco as enchanting as his articles in the *Times*. Yet, his tales about Royalty did not convince us that King Constantine would declare war on Germany because this attractive emissary from Great Britain had once amused a whole tea-party of Royalties by reproving H.R.H. Princess—for the way she ate her bread and butter, or by the way she reproved him . . . I forget the details of this bygone court comedy; but no amount of play with bread and butter seemed humorous enough to compensate the King for the failure of the Entente to send six-sevenths of the force they had promised. And there was another story about one of the English princesses who had arrived to stay with Mr. Harris in Morocco without any luggage . . . but I could not help reflecting that two Divisions of the Allies had just arrived to stay with King Constantine lacking most of their luggage, and I felt sure even that story would fail to persuade the King to declare war upon Germany.

I must not suggest that Mr. Harris himself was fancying

his visit would take the place of troops, or even that he would successfully play Yorick to the Hamlet of King Constantine. He possessed the authentic manner of the Edwardian courtier, and it may be that somebody at home, hearing that Sir Francis Elliot and King Constantine were not personally sympathetic with one another, conceived the idea of dispatching Mr. Harris to lay before His Majesty the point of view of the British Government in a way that would appeal to him socially.

There is no doubt that Sir Francis Elliot did intensely dislike the ordeal of an audience with a man who could not understand him and whom he could not understand. Writing to Paula, Princess of Saxe-Weimar, on December 8th of this year, King Constantine says :

The French Minister is an impossible man, the two Ministers, he and the Englishman are indulging in politics on their own accord and endeavouring to display some zeal. I have had occasion to reproach the former several times, and have absolutely refused to break bread with the other in honour of Lord Kitchener, and now they are a little more polite to me.

Here we see at once a reason why relations between King Constantine and the British Minister were so inharmonious. The King could not get out of his head the *idée fixe* about the ambition of Venizelos to supplant him. The internal politics of Greece were always at the back of his mind. He had suspicions of the friendly relations between Sir Francis Elliot and M. Venizelos, not so much because they might lead him into a war against his will and judgment as because they seemed to threaten the dynasty. It was well known that Venizelos would have liked to see the throne of Greece occupied by a British Prince of the Blood : but the Self-Denying Ordinance of Great Britain, France, and Russia put such a change outside the region of practical politics,

THE ENTRY OF BULGARIA

and his knowledge of Great Britain should have prevented the King's bothering his head about such a fantasy. It would indeed have been much easier to criticize Sir Francis for his disregard of internal politics. If he had urged the people at home to take a strong line about the unwarrantable dissolution of the Chamber in November, 1915, it might not have been effective at once but it might have prevented the protracted weakness displayed through the first half of 1916.

The King like most monarchs was immensely credulous. Credulity was, and still may be, the inevitable result of a Royal education, and such credulity often extends to the belief of the Personage in himself. King Constantine believed whatever he was told by the people whom he wanted to believe ; and when he was told things by people he did not want to believe he became profoundly convinced of his own infallibility and disbelieved them. One of the results of this credulity was that the King often appeared to be telling schoolboy lies. There are many people who feel convinced to this day that he actually did tell lies ; but those people are wrong. He only promulgated the lies of others, firmly wanting to believe them to be the truth. There may seem a quibble in trying to distinguish between conscious self-deception and deliberate lying ; but the handicap of a Royal tradition and education must be measured, and if injustice to a King is to be avoided the distinction *must* be made and borne in mind. A careful study of the *Political Memoirs* of H.R.H. Prince Nicholas of Greece has finally convinced me that most of the troubles which overwhelmed his unfortunate House were caused by this lack of critical experience. There is not a page of the book which does not reveal an emotional sincerity ; but this is coupled with such an excess of credulity as to suggest sometimes the mind of a child telling a fairy story with an unhappy ending.

King Constantine's attitude to Sir Francis Elliot was that of a popular young prefect very good at games, who was expecting to be lectured by an assistant-master upon the management of the house, and who felt that his cricketing average entitled him to resent such interference. Sir Francis's attitude to the King, on the contrary, had nothing pedagogic about it and might be compared to that of a nervous dentist toward his sick patient. I should doubt if he dreaded and detested anything in his life so much as those audiences of the King. Many of the audiences were made necessary by having to notify some unpleasant move of the Entente, with the wisdom of which he so often personally disagreed and of which he had usually been already notified by M. Guillemin, the French Minister, with a blatant lack of tact and a Gallic cocksureness that left the sufferer from his relentless voice in a condition of exacerbation.

A gift for flattery was essential in dealing with King Constantine, and never was man so incapable of flattery as Sir Francis. He neither gave it nor asked for it. I once ventured to compliment him on the style of his telegrams. It was on my side the spontaneous admiration of a writer for another man's ability to handle English. He snapped at once, not as he well might have because I was not at the time in a position to compliment him or his English, but because he was evidently embarrassed. He himself never praised directly, and rarely by implication. Yet, by allowing his subordinates such latitude of criticism and liberty to express it, he did in effect give them the right to suppose that he valued their opinions. There were some who called him weak, others who considered him unduly impressionable. It is true that he was always able to see that most questions have two sides to them, and so, when he did advocate compromise, it was because he genuinely felt that compromise was the justest solution. It was never the professional compromise of diplomacy which is used to

THE ENTRY OF BULGARIA

avoid a decision and may be dictated by self-interest not objective truth. He had an exact and tidy mind which made him impatient of even a technical flaw in the routine of the Chancery work. This anxiety over externals made him sometimes appear more seriously concerned for the form than for the substance of what he wished to say. But I always thought that this anxiety concealed an inward doubt of his own successful presentation of the facts, of the inferences to be drawn from them, and of the course he was advocating. He would be feeling the uncertainty which perpetually frets the man of open mind on whom is placed the responsibility of choosing between two points of view ; and the desire that, whatever doubts might exist about the matter, there should be none about the manner may have made him, as some thought, waste too much of his time over the routine of the Chancery. As an example of his 'pedantry' I may instance the annoyance it caused him to find the Protecting and Guaranteeing Powers of Great Britain, France, and Russia always referred to as the Protecting Powers. And when in a fume of irritation with some Foreign Office telegram he commented to me on this inexact reproduction of the phraseology of the Treaties which gave those Powers a godfatherly interest in Greek affairs, I at once saw the importance for our position of the second participle. To protect was merely to impose a duty on ourselves ; to guarantee was to demand a corresponding duty from Greece. That the King of Greece contravened the spirit if not the letter of the Greek constitution is a charge that his most devoted adherents find it difficult to rebut ; but it was not until June, 1916 that advantage of this was taken to demand new Elections by the result of which we pledged ourselves to abide. Now, in the original draft of the Note that was finally presented by the Entente Powers on June 21st there was no clause demanding the dissolution of the Chamber and fresh Elections. It was I who entreated

Sir Francis to press for the inclusion of that demand, and it was by reminding him of the importance he attached to that usually omitted participle 'guaranteeing' that I was finally able to convince him of the vital necessity of that clause unless the Note was to be a farce. But the story of how Sir Edward Grey came to assent to its inclusion, which at first he refused, must wait for another volume.

When Venizelos resigned on October 7th M. Zaïmis was charged to form a Government. M. Zaïmis had been called to power several times before to tide over a political crisis, and he was to be called to power several times again. I confess I never succeeded in grasping why M. Zaïmis was always employed on these occasions, for his inactivity was by no means masterly, and I cannot trace a single advantage from any of his usually brief Premierships. There was an old whist adage which said 'when in doubt lead diamonds.' M. Zaïmis was led like a small diamond. He was used like a punctuation mark for the country to take breath before the next sentence. Indeed, his actual appearance did suggest a stalwart little colon, which is itself a punctuation mark seldom used with any clear notion of its purpose or propriety. In his favour was complete freedom from a horde of dependent partisans greedy for jobs, and perhaps in consequence an equal freedom from personal enemies. It was no disadvantage to be outside party politics; but that absence of personal enemies betrays the fundamental weakness of M. Zaïmis, for it could only mean either that he had always been ready to sacrifice his convictions to aristocratic esteem, which differs only in degree from democratic popularity, or that he had no convictions profound enough and sincere enough to sacrifice. Among the public men of Greece he was the favourite of Sir Francis Elliot, and in remembering their temperamental affinity a third alternative presents itself to explain the apparent weakness of that stocky little man with the honest blue eyes. Perhaps

THE ENTRY OF BULGARIA

like Sir Francis he always perceived that both sides were right and that both sides were equally wrong. However, though M. Zaimis himself was everybody's friend, his Government included some of the most virulent personal enemies of Venizelos, among them men like Rhallis who in his heart believed that the policy of Venizelos was for the ultimate good of his country and who for the gratification of a private hatred forsook his belief, Gounaris, Theotokis, and Stephen Dragoumis. Yet this Government was supposed to express the will of a Chamber in which there was a clear majority of 56 for Venizelos.

On October 8th the new President of the Council issued a statement that the policy of the Government would rest on the same basis as that adopted by Greece since the outbreak of the war and that the country would remain in a condition of armed neutrality, watching the trend of events with lively interest. Next day the Austro-Germans occupied Belgrade, and the Serbian Government which had retired to Nish appealed to her Ally to help her in accord with the Treaty of 1913. Pages have been written about the intentions of this Treaty, and after reading most of them I cannot make up my mind to express an opinion whether Greece did or did not dishonour her obligations in letter or in spirit or in both. There is an equally good case to be argued for the two mutually contradictory interpretations. Even if Greece did back out of a contract duly signed, sealed, and witnessed, there is no doubt whatever that, after the reception by the Entente Powers of earlier Greek offers, the chief blame of the refusal to march in this hour of peril for Serbia must rest upon those Powers. It is difficult to write coolly with the foreknowledge of that betrayal of Greece to the Turks in 1922, a betrayal in which France and Italy behaved like two jealous and venal strumpets and England like a cowardly middle-aged procuress. How with such knowledge can a writer dare

condemn the action of Greece in refusing to march to the aid of Serbia? Moreover, the military situation was by now lamentable indeed. Belgrade had fallen, and the Bulgarians were gathering ominously on the Serbian flank. On October 12th Colonel Napier,* the British Military Attaché in Sofia, Mr. G. H. Fitzmaurice, Counsellor of Legation there, and Mr. W. J. Garnett, First Secretary, reached the Piræus. Two days later Bulgaria declared war upon Serbia, whereupon the Entente Powers like angry governesses defied by an unruly child declared that the offers of Greek and Serbian territory to Bulgaria must now be taken as cancelled. On October 15th I was formally seconded for service in Athens, which against that bewildering sweep of larger events it seems bathos to mention. On the same day Liebig departed to Salonica as already related, and I was in sole charge of the contre-espionage under V.

On going round to Academy Street that evening about half-past six to notify V of Liebig's safe departure without having had anybody assassinated I found him closeted with the newly arrived Napier and Fitzmaurice. Only the green-shaded lamp on V's desk was alight, and the picture of the three men sitting in the shadows and looking up quickly from their discussion like conspirators when I came in has remained most vividly in my memory. The resignation of Venizelos had made V nervous, and perhaps the arrival of Fitzmaurice who had been at the Embassy in Constantinople when V was Military Consul of another Turkish city had brought Turkey uncomfortably close to Greece. Certainly from the time Fitzmaurice arrived from Sofia, though he remained in Athens but a few days, V became obsessed by the fancy of the most horrible things happening to us all, the most horrible being that he himself might be kidnapped by the Turks and carried off to captivity and torture. Fitzmaurice had been the chief source of communication

* Lieut.-Col. Hon. H. D. Napier, C.M.G.

THE ENTRY OF BULGARIA

between the Old Turks and the Embassy. He had put all his faith on the ability of the Old Turks to stave off the Revolution and when the Committee of Union and Progress triumphed, and gave the Young Turks with the unscrupulous Enver at their head the supreme power, Fitzmaurice was lost in the new political world of Turkey. I gathered from others that he had been handling the Bulgarians as if they too were Old Turks and could be cozened into behaving themselves. From him, an Irishman by race, birth, and education, the East had wrung all that was typically Irish except the blarney, and even the blarney it had turned into something that was indistinguishable from the wheedling of a crafty old Oriental who intended to have the price he wanted for his carpet and who was willing to argue about it for a week if necessary, sipping now and then at his coffee, puffing now and then at his hubble-bubble. I remember how this evening, as he sat there in the shadow, his big hooked nose caught a ray of light from V's lamp and gave him the look of some old corvine bird, and I remember how in his slow ingratiating voice he had said something derogatory about the Greeks. At once I replied hotly, with contempt for the way the Bulgarians had been allowed to fool us, and V who could not bear 'scenes' began to wag his head apprehensively. Fitzmaurice was generous and equable under criticism, and we dined together that very night to continue the discussion. He advocated the most ruthless methods to compel Greece to enter the war, even to the extent of taking Corfu from her and instituting a blockade, and he was genuinely shocked when on October 17th Sir Edward Grey offered her Cyprus if she would join the Allies. He sounded like an old-fashioned assistant-master who could not keep pace with the ideas of a faddy Head, and who thought that the school was going to the dogs through lack of discipline and excess of prizes. Anyway, this was no moment for distributing prizes. The only

influential move for the Allies was to send the men and the guns. If the 150,000 men promised had arrived by now, although King Constantine and his military advisers would probably still have held out for neutrality, it might have been possible to bring the country in on our side. Every day, however, was making it more difficult, for every day came news of the drawing round Serbia of the Austro-German-Bulgarian host. The beleaguered country seemed to have as little chance as a solitary swimmer in tropical waters to escape the dark wings of a devil-fish, and on October 18th Sir Edward Carson, to show what he felt about the sacrifice of Serbia to the mirage of that Western offensive, resigned from the Coalition Government. It was an honourable gesture.

No ex-members of the British Legation in Sofia should have been allowed to come to Athens this October. They should all have returned home with the Minister, Mr. O'Beirne. Nothing could have been more tactless in regard to Greek susceptibilities at a time of such tension and nothing could have been a more unfortunate advertisement of our diplomatic defeat in Sofia. Napier and Garnett were actually attached to the Legation, the latter taking the place of Goodhart who was sent to some Legation in South America. Napier like most military attachés was full of political advice, and though much of it was good it irritated Sir Francis Elliot and exasperated Cuninghame who, never being prone to think he knew less than other people, was quite convinced that he knew a good deal more about the situation in Greece than his brother officer. Napier's advocacy of strong measures to compel Greece's entry was cancelled by Cuninghame's even more forcibly expressed opposition to such a course. At this date Cuninghame was up at Salonica, and Sir Francis, who may have hoped for a brief vacation from military attachés, did not seem too well pleased to find he was to have a substitute. Napier was

THE ENTRY OF BULGARIA

sending telegrams to the Director of Military Operations through the secret-service cipher. This puzzled me, because until then I had supposed that the C organization was dependent on the Foreign Office not the War Office. It also struck me as unreasonable to use Sir Francis Elliot's signature to telegrams sent in a cipher over the use of which he had no control. It was true that the military attaché had his own cipher, but when he telegraphed to the War Office it was an understood thing that he should show his telegrams first to the Minister. V's telegrams, though signed by Sir Francis Elliot, were not previously read by him, for they were presumed to be on matters of which a British Minister should have no official cognizance. This overhead telegraphing will suggest why in nearly every capital the secret-service organization was at odds with the Embassy or Legation. I was not called upon yet to exercise my own discretion in a matter like this ; but when the time came I took Sir Francis Elliot completely into my confidence, and as a result we were never once let down by him while I was in Athens. Let me add that no criticism of Colonel Napier himself is implied by the above remarks. He writes with perfect frankness about those telegrams in his interesting book *A Military Attaché in the Balkans*.

On October 20th the Greek Government formally declined the offer of Cyprus. Sir Francis had already telegraphed to Sir Edward Grey, suggesting that we should guarantee to the Greeks at the end of the war the whole of Bulgarian Thrace as well if they would come in now on our side. To this Sir Edward Grey replied that he did not like the idea of offering other people's territory. After the offer of Cavalla and Monastir to Bulgaria such a reply exceeded the scope of Jane Austen's quiet and well-founded humour. It seemed to us in Athens as rich as the comic gusto of Dickens which some call caricature.

CHAPTER XI

STAFF WORK

BEFORE the state of war with Bulgaria was declared there had existed at Dedeagatch an export business in eggs run by a Levantine Englishman I will call Duveen, and one Alberto Zanardi Landi, a Smyrniote Italian. They might appropriately have been turkeys' eggs, for with them was exported much valuable military information about the enemy. I had already met Duveen at G.H.Q. whither he had come once from Dedeagatch to consult with Deedes about various projects. It was in the days when Operations and Intelligence messed together in a big marquee, and I remember that Deedes and his guest sat apart from the rest in earnest colloquy through dinner and that I asked who the tall dark hatchet-faced fellow was, to be told that he was one of Deedes's ruffians, a generic term used by the rest of the staff to describe anybody who visited Deedes whether he were a consul like Heathcote-Smith or a baggy-breeched bandit that was to land on the Turkish coast and try to cut out a gun. Duveen with his sallow face, which seemed as big as a horse's in the candlelit shadows of the marquee, struck me as a perfect example of the secret agent for the most exigent author. He was the first authentic specimen I had seen, and from the other end of the long mess-table I gazed in fascination at what I was fancying a fine sinister figure for a romance in the future. His eyes were like murky unfathomable pools: his lantern jaws worked away slowly at the mastication of our gloomy food; and those hunched shoulders of a man so tall as to find his

STAFF WORK

height an inconvenience gave him when seated an aspect of grim strength. I have no business to be indulging myself in even this brief sketch of Duveen, because it was his partner who became my man. After the ultimatum to Bulgaria Duveen had been sent off at once to Salonica, where V was developing a bureau of military information under James Morgan, who had been Acting Consul at Dedeagatch, and a bureau of contre-espionage under Hugh Whittall. I saw Whittall for a minute or two in V's room at Academy Street. He was as handsome as the most admired film star, strong and athletic too, with a masterful personality and great physical and moral courage. He could not pull with Colonel Cunliffe-Owen* who was head of the Intelligence at Army Headquarters in Salonica, and the result was endless intrigue and bickering which culminated in the removal of the V Bureau in 1917. Duveen himself came up against the Military Authorities, and at the end of 1916 he was sent down to work with me in Athens, where we shall meet him again. To Duveen's ex-partner I was presented on an evening of mid-October in V's little room.

"I've just been explaining to Zanardi that most unfortunately the A side of our branch in Salonica cannot make use of his valuable services any more, but that I thought you might be able to use them now that you have taken on the reorganization of B work in earnest."

It was clear that V was in his own charming and courteous way giving an order, and, though another salary like Zanardi's was likely to strain the resources of our monthly budget, I at once agreed that we could make excellent use of his services; and from that moment Cavour, as he was told to sign his communications, became as integral a part of the bureau as Tucker himself.

Zanardi Landi† was an Italian *cavaliere* of good family,

* Lt.-Col. F. Cunliffe-Owen, C.M.G., R.A.

† Miss Elissa Landi, the actress, is a niece of his.

who for business purposes had, as I remember, kept the Austrian nationality which presumably dated from earlier days of trading in the Levant. At the outbreak of war with Turkey he had had to effect a hurried escape from Asia Minor to avoid the unwelcome demands that Austrian citizenship might have made upon him, for he was of course a devoted Italian, with all the extra fervour of patriotism which exile from one's own country so often kindles. He had been unable, however, to get his wife and family out of Smyrna. Working as he was on obtaining military intelligence from Turkey, it would have involved them in grave danger had he tried to communicate with them in any way, so that for many months now he had been without news of his home.

In appearance Cavour was a handsome burly man, somewhere in the later thirties, with curly brown hair rapidly grizzling under the nervous anxiety of the times. He had thrown himself into secret-service work with the passion of an artist, and it was always a resentment that he had to accept a monthly salary, for that seemed to bring him down nearer than he cared to the level of a Clarence. However, he had no choice in the matter, because he was entirely cut off from his own material resources, and without a salary he would have been useless for the task on which he was engaged. Between myself and Cavour there was an immediate sympathy which enabled me to make claims upon his devotion that I should have hesitated to make on many of my associates at that time. He was hasty to excess, but brave and chivalrous and usually willing to forgive injury or fancied insult from a consciousness of nobility's obligations. Sometimes he was inclined to assume too grand a manner with those whom the conditions of war had made his peers. Among my few scraps of paper left from this time I find a note in the large angular upright hand of Clarence which reminds me of the

STAFF WORK

innumerable internal quarrels and jealousies that never ceased to disturb just a little more the already sufficiently disturbed waters in which I was fishing.

A reputable Greek ship-owner in England had been denounced by one of his clerks for almost every marine crime under the sun from barratry to supplying German submarines. Old Weir without authority from me had taken it upon himself to waste the time of his sub-agents upon this affair, whereupon Cavour had come to the rescue of the unfortunate ship-owner and produced a brother of his at the Piræus, who had satisfied me of the baselessness of the charge. On further investigation I had come to the conclusion that there was nothing in the matter except attempted blackmail. I reprimanded Weir for his behaviour; but the old man disobeyed my orders, and entered into a temporary alliance with Clarence to continue what amounted to a deliberate persecution. Here is the letter of Clarence, who was writing from some steamer in harbour where he was checking the passenger list :

On board S.S. Minotauros.

Dear Capt. Zed,

Sorry to trouble you. 5 weeks ago I brought you a letter written by —, a clerk in a Shipping office at Piræus who pledged himself to denounce a Greek firm established in the U.K. against a reward of £10,000. According to your instructions I dropped the matter altogether and never saw the man since.

Agent P comes on board and tells me that Cavour asked him about this matter and told him that very likely "Clarence and you are trying to do money."

If I had time I would come myself and told Cavour my mind about his words. Very likely he might whitewash this Greek firm for money.

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

Please investigate the matter and hear Agent P who knows all details of this story. I ignore them entirely. The only thing I know is that informant — is a respectable young man and that this firm rushed our Government by avoiding war-taxes.

I enclose herewith a reply for noble Cavour. The other day you ordered me to keep my grievances to myself. I gladly (sic) agreed to it, but I think such remarks are the limit.

Apologizing for the trouble.

Obediently yours,

Clarence.

Excuse scribble, ink and pen are bad and steamer rolling.

This is typical of Cavour. Not content with establishing the innocence of the wronged firm he wanted to lay low its accusers against whom he was ready to ride out like Don Quixote, forgetting that our business was to ascertain the facts not to punish the guilty, forgetting too that internal squabbles between himself and the other section-chiefs were not advantageous to the efficiency of the work as a whole. Ah, those wretched intrigues and counter-intrigues within! Later on, a serious quarrel broke out between Cavour and Tucker, to the root of which I was never able to dig. Those internal quarrels created for me more difficulties than all the work of the enemy put together, and the effort to keep the faculties cool and avoid being swayed by personal sympathies and antipathies was sometimes an intolerable strain. Moreover, with the gradual extension of the organization I soon began to find the effect of rousing in peers of my own jealousy, in superiors resentment, and among inferiors envy. There was no happy mean of indifference. People on our own side were either enthusiastically in favour of our work or bitterly against it, and most of this enthusiasm or bitterness was concentrated as much upon myself as upon the work. I must not bore the

reader by psychologizing about myself ; but I should hate to think that he might suppose me capable of paying back old grudges in these *Memories*. If I happen to make some people look ridiculous, I can pledge my word that I never once concealed at the time my personal opinion of their absurdity. This exaggerated sense of the comic in my relations with other people was probably a severe handicap to my work in Greece, for nobody discourages personal ambition like Thalia. A cold ambition would have made me more prudent, and it would have given me the power of hatred, which I lack, because I cannot hate the man who has given me an opportunity to laugh at him. Indeed, I often had what was something very like affection for some of my worst enemies, who I need scarcely add were never to be found in the ranks of the official enemy.

The personal factor was in Athens predominant, and it may be doubted whether the ultimate vastness of the war has not tended to obscure the predominance of the personal factor everywhere. The amount to which the mighty forces set in motion all over the world in August 1914 were uncontrollable may have been exaggerated. My own experience, which by the time I shall have finished these memoirs, will not be considered narrow, led me to attribute a far greater importance to the influence of the individual human being than we seem prepared to admit nowadays. There did arrive the moment when the individual fell a victim to what looked like a general law of circumstance ; but every victim was the cause of his own sacrifice because he maintained an individual point of view either too obstinately or too long. Those who could most easily lose their personalities lasted longest, whether on the field of battle or in the cockpit of Whitehall.

The situation in Athens was caused by the personal antipathy of King Constantine for M. Venizelos, of Venizelos for the King. That it was aggravated by the behaviour

of the Allies or of the Central Powers may be true; but historians who try to apportion the responsibility between the French, British, Russians, Italians, Germans, Austrians, Bulgarians, and Turks will be wasting their time. Their actions were but incidents to exacerbate or alleviate the situation according to the point of view of those who believed in the King or Venizelos. All that the Entente did in Greece was done at first because it was believed that the majority of the nation endorsed its actions, and at the same time whatever was done was supposed by the opponents of Venizelos to be dictated solely by Venizelos himself out of a desire for power. It may be true that King Constantine believed at first in the certainty of a German victory; but long after he had begun to have his doubts of this he continued his original policy, because to do otherwise would have been to admit that Venizelos was right.

"What," said the King one day that autumn to Cuninghame, "what does Mackenzie think he is doing, driving about Athens like a Sherlock Holmes *à la manqué*?"

And when it was suggested that there was plenty to be done in trying to counter the espionage of the German Legation and the activity of Baron Schenck's propaganda, he laughed. He had been assured there was no espionage and no propaganda except by the Allies. A month or two later in giving an audience to one of the wandering diplomats, he again referred to my activity, and this particular wanderer asked if he had ever given me an opportunity to put a few facts before him.

"No," said the King, "he has never done me the honour of asking for an audience."

So my informant suggested that I should ask for an audience. But after consultation it was decided that, were Sir Francis Elliot to request an audience for me and were His Majesty to refuse, it might lead to an embarrassing position, since it would make the King's disapproval of my

STAFF WORK

work express and might lead to my withdrawal. I was, of course, careful never to communicate directly or indirectly with M. Venizelos until the summer of 1917 when the King had left Greece. Indeed, I felt it incumbent to avoid all contact with either social or political leaders. I regret that no effort was made to give King Constantine an opportunity to hear the other side. It is difficult now not to believe that I could have put before him facts of which his advisers kept him in ignorance and equally difficult not to believe that he must have had enough common sense to profit by such knowledge. Yet when I read some of the statements made by apologists for King Constantine I begin to wonder if such a credulous mind was capable of being illuminated by common sense.

Reflections prompted by the memory of internal quarrels within the Bureau have led me far afield; but that old letter of Clarence's set me thinking what wars within the war were raged and how much more influential is the feeling of Jones for his nextdoor neighbour Smith than all the signatures at the foot of the Kellogg Pact if we wish to outlaw war. Mutual love is likely to provide a more durable foundation for peace than common fear.

The addition of Cavour to my staff offered an opportunity to keep in touch with Italian Intelligence through Colonel Mombelli. Not that Italian Intelligence itself was of much value in Greece, and most of the reports we received were not worth the trouble of translation. Mombelli himself was always anxious to help in every way he could, but the fact that Italy was not at war with Germany considerably hindered any practical work. The first port of call westward from Greece was Messina, and throughout the latter end of 1915 and most of 1916 there flowed from Patras and the Piræus a steady stream of enemy agents. Most of them were able to roam about Europe without molestation and most of them used Switzerland as the clearing-house for

their information. Later on when a stringent control of passports was instituted we were able, if not to stop, at any rate to impede their movements; but at the date of which I am writing our only chance was either to arrest them at sea through one of our patrols or to notify their imminent arrival to the authorities in Messina, where partly owing to the divorce between the civil and military authorities, partly owing to a definite prejudice in favour of Germany among certain of the officials we never received anything but the most grudging co-operation. In the end I was compelled to write a report on the attitude of the Messina port officials after a particularly shameless instance of what looked like deliberate collusion with the other side, and in the autumn of 1916 when Italy had at last declared war upon Germany I interviewed the Directors of Military and Naval Intelligence in Rome with the result that several officials were moved elsewhere and some attempt was made to achieve a sort of efficiency in the control of passenger traffic. Still, it would not be the least exaggeration to say that all over the Mediterranean Italy contributed nothing to the common Intelligence, dread of a strengthened Greece's emerging from the war and a feverish jealousy of France being the inspiration of every move. As it happened, Colonel Mombelli was entirely free from the least inclination toward political intrigue, and when in 1917 he was promoted General and left Athens to command the Italian contingent in Salonica he was succeeded as Military Attaché by my old friend Vitali,* so that I was twice fortunate and was able to avoid anything like the strained relations which existed between the French and Italian Intelligence Services. Moreover, Cavour, who as I said had taken up his work with the passion of an artist, was incapable of spoiling it by intrigues on the side. With perfect confidence in his loyalty and in the good will of

* See *Gallipoli Memories*, p. 354, etc.

Mombelli I was able right through that difficult year of 1916 to count in Athens itself on the most devoted help in every way that it could be given. Still, even so there were complications, not the least tiresome of which was an almost continuous effort to dislodge Cavour from his position by trying to poison me against him by tales of his dark intrigues for the benefit of Italy.

Sometime early in October J. L. Myres* had arrived in Athens from the island of Calymnos, his headquarters in the Dodecanese, fuming over tales about the Italian obstructionist tactics that were making it impossible to obtain any military information through channels in Southern Anatolia. He was full of the difficulty of carrying on without adequate financial support, and I promised to do what I could to persuade V to allow him a monthly addition to his funds from the contre-espionage budget. I had not seen Myres since rehearsals for *The Clouds* in the winter of 1905 at Oxford, and my only financial transaction with him hitherto had been my share in a fine imposed by him as Junior Proctor upon my friend Pirie-Gordon when a brogue had descended from a window in 43 High Street upon the head of a policeman below. The brogue had been Pirie-Gordon's, but the hand which flung it had been mine. Hence my willingness to contribute £2 10s. toward the £5 of which my fellow lodger was mulcted next morning at Christ Church. A scholar of mundane reputation before the war Myres was now a Lieutenant-Commander in the R.N.V.R. and likely if the war lasted long enough to achieve considerable fame as a mariner. In appearance he resembled some Assyrian King, Assur-Nazir-Pal perhaps, with more than a suggestion of the pirate Teach, and to such an outward form were added the passionate ubiquity of the Flying Dutchman and the fierce concentration of Captain Ahab. Few people, aware that Myres had once been a scholar of

* Professor J. L. Myres, O.B.E., Wykeham Professor of Ancient History.

Winchester and New College, a Fellow of Magdalen, a Student and Tutor of Christ Church, and a Professor of Liverpool University, could have helped feeling a slight astonishment at the violence of the change effected in a scholar by these changing times. Not so the Royal Navy which accepted Myres's feats of brigandage and terrorism on the coast of Asia Minor as the sort of thing any professor might do to whom a temporary commission had been recommended by their Lordships of the Admiralty. Technically Myres was attached to the same organization as myself, but as with those whose employment lay in the waters of the Ægean V had to all intents renounced any responsibility for him beyond paying through the Commercial Department his monthly allowance for Intelligence work. I made several attempts to bring back wandering bodies like Myres within the orbit of V's Central Bureau, but V remained obstinate and would have nothing to do with anything that savoured of naval Intelligence. It was in vain to argue that the distinction between contre-espionage and contraband work was illogical and harmful.

"As I see it, V, you've allowed the Commercial Department to grab practically all the funds allowed for B work, and now when you're really trying at last to develop your C/E side here in Athens there is practically no money to spare for it while we get no help at all from the Contraband side."

"Well, I don't know anything about naval Intelligence, Z, and I don't like interfering with it."

"I don't ask you to interfere. I simply want to have the benefit of information from a much richer and better equipped show than I can possibly scrape together on the present allowance. We have no car in Athens, though a car is absolutely essential for our work. Yet there is a Ford in Crete which is being used by Consul Rawlins, presumably for the service of the Commercial Department. You paid

STAFF WORK

for that car. You pay for the running of it. Why can't we have it? All we get from Crete are a few worthless crumbs of information which the Commercial Department cannot be bothered to sweep up and invites us to tidy for them. It's due to lack of co-ordination."

"Well, I'd rather not discuss the question any more, Z. I'm quite decided about naval Intelligence."

"Then there's Heathcote-Smith at Mytilene. You get the results of his A work, but his B work is scattered. Some goes to the Commercial Department here, some direct to the S.N.O. at Port Iero, some to G.H.Q. Imbros, but none to us. Then there's Hodder in Samos, and Chafy in Chios, and Myres in the Dodecanese, and . . ."

"I cannot interfere with the naval side of our organization. That's a matter for Sells. You and he will always pull together."

"Yes, but Sells doesn't know where he is. He has no funds of his own, and he is entirely dependent for information on the Commercial Department whose funds are all found by you."

"Well, I'd rather leave things as they are."

"I don't want you to disturb them. All I want is for you to insist that any information about the activity of enemy agents, smugglers, contrabandists and the rest should be sent to me, or if you like to Sells. You find the money. You've only to tell Waugh that you want the information passed on to us."

"I do *not* like interfering with the naval side."

I was a novice then to the theory of the departmental balance of power, and I did not realize that I was proposing to upset a nicely adjusted state of affairs by which V paid the money from C to Waugh who received the information, while the Navy to all practical purposes ran the show. The result was an utter lack of co-ordination which wasted time, money and energy and showed little or nothing at the end

of it. The Commercial Department of the British Legation had assumed responsibility for the issue of all permits of importation into or exportation from Greece. As such it was a public institution and should never have been financed from the secret vote. There was no possible objection to the Commercial Attaché's having an Intelligence service of his own. Indeed there was every reason why he should. But that he should financially control all Intelligence in the Islands was ludicrous. He made no attempt to organize it in any way, and he was quite content to let the officers whose funds were paid through him become entirely subject to the Senior Naval Officer on the spot. There was no question of taking anything away from the Commercial Department. All that Sells and I wanted was to knit together the loose organization of marine Intelligence. But our attempts to do this were frustrated time after time. It is in fact a mistake to allow two departments to exist side by side when one is in charge of a professional and the other in charge of an amateur. The amateur has an unfair advantage in being independent of the promotion and honours which are vital to the professional's career. He can afford to take risks, to offend superiors, and break all the rules of the game of mutual aid. The professional cannot. On the other hand the amateur is himself at a grave disadvantage, because he is always up against the pack, the members of which though they will snap and snarl at one another are ready to tear an outsider to pieces. There was no rivalry between Sells and myself. With a jealous temperament he as a professional sailor might have resented my mock turtle navalism. Fortunately, however, we did not regard the war as a bone of contention for two dogs to growl over at one another.

The position of Myres was a good illustration of the haphazard working of Intelligence. Most prudently from his point of view he had put himself at the service of the

Vice-Admiral commanding the Ægean Squadron, and beyond the fact that he drew his money from V through Waugh he might as well, so far as Athens was concerned, have been roaming in his motor-caique about Polynesia. Those cattle-raids of his on the Anatolian seaboard when the Assyrian Myres came down like a wolf on the Turkish fold were a delight to ward-rooms and gun-rooms, and they may have incommoded the enemy, though they were stopped in the end as doing more harm to the Greek population on the mainland than to their Turkish masters. So late as 1917, long after the raids had been stopped, the Greek wife of a distinguished English scholar in Samos used to scream at the top of her voice when from her balcony she perceived Myres walking along the street below, for she had an idea that Myres in the course of one foray had destroyed a family farm on the mainland opposite. There was indeed something irreconcilable between Myres the Assyrian pirate and Myres the purveyor of information to the Commercial Department, between Myres the Blackbeard of the Ægean and Myres the Gladstone Professor of Greek at the University of Liverpool. Not that I am criticizing his forward policy. Not I indeed! I should assuredly have done the same, had I had the chance.

Myres's own account of life in the Dodecanese, when he was in Athens that autumn, filled me with a longing to be out again in the Ægean myself. His description of Rhodes bewitched my fancy, and when he told of an English hostel in the Street of the Knights, a perfect early fourteenth-century house of about five rooms that could probably be secured at a bargain price, I begged him on no account to forget my desire for it and allow it to fall into the hands of another. The chapel had been desecrated and used as a mosque, but the whole building was now empty. For weeks I used to fall asleep thinking of that hostel, which used to stand in faery shape upon the margin of the slow river of

sleep and haunt my dreams like a verse from *The Eve of St. Agnes*.

*A casement high and triple-arch'd there was
All garlanded with carven imag'ries.*

I was to see with my own eyes that stone thought of England when I visited Rhodes in the Spring of 1917; but by that time like everything else in the Dodecanese it had been grabbed by the Italians.

Myres disliked the Italians and hated their occupation of these Greek islands. They apparently interfered in various petty ways with his work, while he did all he could to irritate them. I have some ill-written and almost illegible notes in an old pocket-book of my talk with Myres about Intelligence work that autumn; but there was little of importance beyond an assortment of names for our rapidly growing card-index, smugglers most of them engaged in running contraband to Asia Minor and quite beyond reach of anything we could do in Athens. However, I extracted a promise to keep us supplied from time to time with a summary of his work so far as it affected our particular branch, and I remember an excellent report on submarines in the Bay of Budrum, from which one picturesque comparison of them moving along the reeds inshore like duck still sticks in my mind. Myres was in Athens for hardly a couple of days. He sighed for his caique and the cliffs of the Cnidian promontory and his house in the austere isle of Calymnos and dark blue islands rising all around from a serene and pale October sea. So he faded away from the jangling trams of Stadium Street, with his dark beard and glittering eyes and that strange unmirthful smile which displayed so suddenly such white teeth.

When Myres was in Athens D.G. Hogarth* was also there, in search of an Intelligence job. He came up and talked to

* The late D. G. Hogarth, C.M.G., D.Litt.

STAFF WORK

me in my room at the British School, of which he had been the Director eighteen years earlier. Hogarth, who was another Magdalen man, had a very rich and abundant personality. His presence in a room filled it with a warm and glowing life. While I was an undergraduate he had been a rare visitor to Oxford, being abroad most of the time exploring and excavating in Syria, Cyprus, Egypt and Asia Minor; but, when he did come into Hall, his laugh used to ring out up at High Table, where the Dons in our time usually ate their food as quietly as rabbits. Now his presence in the deserted School seemed to fill it again with life from himself as we sat discussing possible jobs. When he paid his brief visit in Athens, Bulgaria was still out of the war, and I remember suggesting that he should make for Bucharest at once and start a Bureau there for military information, leaving on his way up a well equipped nucleus of spies in Sofia. I know I grew so much enamoured of my scheme, as I sketched it out, that in the end I felt I should like to put it into effect myself and suggested Hogarth should take my place in Athens to set me free for what ought to be a capital adventure, and at the same time a practical and useful move. But word came that Hogarth was wanted in Egypt, where in 1916 he became Director of the famous Arab Bureau. He was evidently delighted to be off. Roumania did not appeal to him. I can see his expression now while I held forth on the possibilities of work there. It was the expression of a dramatist being invited to go out to Hollywood and work for the movies.

The difficulty of achieving any kind of even moderately accurate estimate of what the Intelligence of the enemy is doing in a neutral capital need hardly be stressed. When we remember the comparatively few spies against whom there was enough evidence to establish a case in Great Britain itself, where during the whole course of the war there were only about nine capital convictions, the difficulty

of establishing a case in Athens will be appreciated. We had no means for making a perquisition on the premises of the suspected except by violating the law and at the same time committing a breach of neutrality. And when we did manage to build up a good case we could do nothing with the suspect except advise the Navy of his presence in some steamer or notify the police of his likely arrival at some Allied port. I have already mentioned the unsatisfactory state of affairs at Messina which made it really a waste of time to bother about any suspect, once he eluded our patrols. And the odds were in favour of his doing that, because by the time our warning telegrams reached Mudros through the Naval Attaché it was often too late for effective action to be taken. Moreover, these arrests at sea were usually fruitless, because the suspect always had plenty of time to destroy any incriminating evidence before the ship was boarded. Even in Egypt, owing to the complicated relations between the Imperial Government and the Egyptian authorities, added to which was the pull between the Residency and the Military, added to which in turn was the even more hopelessly complicated tangle in the relations of the various military commanders one to another, it was exceedingly difficult to secure any kind of effective action. We could do nothing in Athens at first beyond signalling the probable arrival of a suspect in Alexandria by some ship; but we were never told of the result of our warning, and so we never had any means of checking the source from which the denunciation was received. Incidentally many of the suspects over whom we wasted a great deal of time in Athens turned out to be plotting to smuggle hashish into Egypt. Having by now reached a firm conclusion, which is never likely to be shaken, that nearly all Intelligence work in war* is a waste of time,

* Naturally I do not include in such a statement the Intelligence of an army in the field. But what can agents find out about the intentions of Governments that have no notion what their own intentions are?

money, and energy, it is mortifying to confess that I once believed my work to be of serious importance and that it did once seem a vital matter to prevent a man's getting into Egypt and out again with some trumpery and archaic information about the disposition of troops along the Canal. In the house of Dr. Alexander Maclean where Dr. Johnson dined on the Island of Mull was a copy of *The Turkish Spy*, which professed to be a set of revelations of the same quality as most of the books published since the war about alleged secret-service. Dr. Johnson observed of this production that 'it told nothing but what everybody might have known at that time, and that what was good in it did not pay you for the trouble of reading to find it.'

As his host observed to him on this very occasion, Dr. Johnson certainly was 'just a hogshead of sense.'

Like everybody else I imagined, when I came to Athens, that the whole of German espionage, propaganda, and submarine Intelligence in Greece was concentrated in the hands of Baron Schenck von Schweinsberg, and it never entered my head that my own plan to achieve a measure of secrecy for my work by an appearance of blatant publicity might have been anticipated. There was nothing in the indigestible *olla podrida* of information I inherited from my predecessor to suggest a doubt of this. Card after card in our index of suspects recorded the subject as a creature of Baron Schenck's. Not since the Father of Lies donned the scarlet tights and doublet of Mephistopheles might one suppose that anybody in human shape had been debited with such an inexhaustible well of evil inspiration.

Baron Schenck had come to Athens as the representative of the Wolfe Press Bureau, which was intended to spread the gospel of German invincibleness round the world. He was first and foremost a press-agent and admirably he did his work, although, as he said to me when a year later we had a parting chat, his success had been due

less to his own ability and the money at his disposal than to the mistakes of the Allies. He did buy up a few disreputable newspapers, but I fancy that the value of such propaganda lay rather in the tangible evidence it offered of German wealth than in the persuasiveness of the tendentious articles printed. The two chief organs of anti-Venizelism, the *Embros* and the *Nea Hemera*, were inspired by a hatred of Venizelos rather than a cupboard love of Germany, and they were edited with unscrupulous ability. Besides buying up a few rags and bribing others to omit nothing and insert everything to the discredit of the Allies, the Baron financed revues at one or two of the theatres, which often provided a capital entertainment. There was one particularly good number during the summer of 1916 in which I was skitted as the head of the British Secret-Service. An absurd creature in a Cameron kilt cut like a candle shade entered with eight secret police, each of them with a big drum, and sang a song about their dark and cunning deeds, the refrain of which was a sort of 'Hush, hush, hush, here comes the boggy man.' At every 'hush' the chorus of eight who all wore huge painted eyes as monocles, walked about on tip-toe and banged their big drums as hard as they could. It is hard to make these bygone japes sound funny in narrative; but when I wanted a tonic I used to go into the theatre for ten minutes and laugh at this skit of myself, who by the way had an illuminated eye which was turned on like a searchlight as the myrmidons walked about the stage on tip-toe and banged their big drums. The actors always knew when I was in front and always exerted themselves to play with a little added verve, and as most of the audience also knew I was present we were all very jolly together. Unfortunately there was never enough money to finance a revue ourselves; but the French ran one or two, and solemn affairs they were with a paid clique which applauded *la belle France* when

she entered like a *diva*. Baron Schenck's revues were more amusing.

However, my first picture of the Baron was not as a genial impresario, but as a kind of gigantic spider living at the German Archæological School in Charilaos Tricoupis Street and spinning webs of marvellous intricacy. It is true that he did from time to time try his hand at espionage ; but his attempts to launch agents were not so successful as his revues. Indeed, they were so futile that when at last we acquired a better grasp of the German organization in Athens we realized that the Baron had been flying kites to draw our attention from more serious workers in that field. To be sure Hoffmann, the chief German agent in Athens, who surrendered to us in September, 1916, told me that Schenck was as jealous of him as his own Legation was and that Schenck had always been ambitious to score off him by getting more successful agents than he did. But there is something about Intelligence work which fosters jealousy, and it would never do to accept too easily one artist's opinion of another.

Baron Schenck, in spite of what the Press correspondents said, had no relations with the King or with the Court, and not many, so far as we could ascertain with members of the various Governments in Greece, while we were soon to discover that by nobody was his presence in Athens more acutely resented than by the German Minister, Count von Mirbach-Harff, and the Staff of the Legation. Indeed, Schenck's notoriety was largely due to his name, which caught the fancy of the reading public. To the British he sounded like the bold bad Baron of a pantomime. The combination of Baron Schenck with Tino was deadly in its destructive effect. If Schenck had had the name of his Minister—Count von Mirbach-Harff—and if King Constantine's pet name had never been divulged, the history of Greece during the war might have been different.

However, as I suggested above, I was a humble member of the reading public when I came to Athens and as such I believed implicitly in the ubiquitous finger of the Baron. I remember Cuninghame's saying one day that the King had expressed to him a good deal of astonishment at our taking the activities of anybody like Schenck seriously, since he had been assured on the very best authority that Schenck had never sent a single spy from Athens since his arrival. At the time I was rather indignant at what was seeming to me the deliberate blindness of the King; but later on I was to reflect that His Majesty had been correctly enough informed by somebody who was probably Major von Falkenhausen, the German Military Attaché. No doubt von Falkenhausen took care not to tell the King how many spies he had himself tried to send. Not that he was ever very successful. And Baron de Grancy, the German Marine Attaché, was even less successful. Still, they were always working away at the business of exporting agents in somewhat the same amateurish and ineffective way as we at first set out to try to stop their export.

Von Falkenhausen was credited with possessing considerable influence over the King whom he visited frequently, and if the King's steadily increasing determination not to march owed anything to his influence he must have played his part well. But it is more likely that fertile soil was responsible than potent seed. One of von Falkenhausen's chief occupations which he shared with his colleague the Marine Attaché was to make arrangements for getting the German mail-bag out of Greece. And one of our occupations became the job of trying to intercept that mail-bag, which fortune at last after many vain attempts allowed us the satisfaction of doing.

Baron de Grancy, who first arrived in Athens about the same time as myself, was a personality I found most attractive, and it always took away some of the pleasure of

the scores I had over the other side that so many of them were over de Grancy. He was a tall well set-up man, with a soft beard, who conveyed the impression of being a poet or musician rather than a naval officer. He reminded me of so many Germans in Capri before the war, of metaphysical arguments with them by the light of the low summer moon, of the mandolins strumming outside Morgano's Café while we drank our beer beneath the great wistaria over the terrace, of the Piazza in the full June sunshine, oh, and of a hundred vanished sights and sounds and scents of a golden age which already I knew in my heart was gone for ever. He was reputed to be a particular favourite of Queen Sophie ; if he was, no doubt it was because Her Majesty recognized in him a most loyal and devoted servant, and not at all, as was commonly reported, because she and he were engaged in active machinations against the Allies. I will take this opportunity of affirming that I believed none of the fantastic tales about her stratagems and that whenever and wherever I could I suppressed their circulation. Alas, she suffered from the same ruinous credulity as the rest of the Royal Family, an instance of which may be found in the autobiography of Mr. Beverley Nichols, who in 1921 was imported to Athens by King Constantine to remove the inkstains with which other journalists had bespattered his reputation during the war. As salts of lemon Mr. Nichols was hardly a success, for the salt was not Attic and the lemon suggested sour grapes. It would be no better worth my while now than it was at the time of publication to contradict in detail Mr. Nichols's account of myself. And after all the King's belief that a young man, clever and precocious though he might be, could on the strength of being given a good time in Athens for a few weeks after the war was well over illuminate the political situation in Greece during the middle of the war was itself merely another instance of that Royal credulity. It was

like hoping to illuminate permanently the great grotto of Antiparos with a schoolboy's squib. The fantastic stories about myself to which currency was given by Mr. Beverley Nichols were on a par with the fantastic stories current about Her Majesty Queen Sophie and Baron de Grancy as partners in espionage. Not that de Grancy was inactive. Why should he have been? He was not sent to Athens as an ornament. As it happened, it was he who was fated to furnish us with more positive evidence of hostile activity than any other member of the enemy Legations. Perhaps the very fact that he was most easily deluded by his employees was itself a testimony to the justice of the impression I formed of his pleasant personality.

De Grancy might as well have been called Submarine Attaché to the German Legation, for submarine Intelligence was his chief nautical duty. And now a few words on that vexed question of supply bases for submarines in Greek waters. It is probable, nay it is almost certain, that the first two or three submarines which reached the Ægean in May, 1915, were able to get what heavy oil they wanted in Greece or from Greek ships; but when the big Austrian and German submarines from Pola began to be busy they could keep at work for a couple of months without returning to their base, and it is absurd to suppose that they were likely to take the unnecessary risk of depending for their fuel on surreptitious visits to remote Greek coves. They did, however, sometimes put in at islands or at lonely parts of the coast for the crew to stretch their legs or obtain supplies of fresh eggs, milk, fruit, and poultry. Occasionally too their officers took advantage of a favourable opportunity to pick up a little intelligence about our shipping. As late as 1917 among the papers of a German or Austrian submarine sunk in Taranto harbour there was found a warning to keep away from the island of Tenos in the Cyclades because the nuns of a convent there were known to supply

STAFF WORK

information to the enemy. Incidentally, there was a ludicrous sequel to this, for I received an urgent telegram in Syra where I was then stationed, ordering me to take immediate steps to suppress these nuns of Tenos who were communicating with the enemy. Some Intelligence officer, reading through the papers of that submarine, had forgotten that to a German we were the enemy.

Unfortunately the British Legation had offered a reward of £2,000 for information which would lead to the capture or destruction of a hostile submarine in the act of refuelling in Greek waters. I say unfortunately, because the fact that nobody was ever able to claim this reward has always been used as a proof of the injustice of our suspicions. And indeed the daily appearance of this large advertisement in the pages of the leading Venizelist papers for many weeks did excite the derision of the other side. However, the advertisement served two purposes. It afforded a good excuse for putting a little money into the hands of the advertising managers of those papers which had supported us through thick and thin; and the drawing of the submarine, which was a prominent feature of the advertisement, was itself so inaccurate that we were always able to tell whether an informant had really seen a submarine or only the picture of it in the papers. The claimants for the reward became an absolute pest, and Sells and I found that so much of our time was being wasted in investigating what always turned out to be preposterous stories that we moved to have the advertisement dropped. However, though there was never anything to suggest that de Grancy was arranging supply bases for submarines, there was plenty of evidence to show that he was trying to obtain information about the movements of Allied ships and the condition of the defences of the various Ægean harbours they were using. Since he continued to do this when the German Legation was cut off from any communication with Berlin,

the inference must be that he was able to communicate directly somehow with the commanders of submarines. De Grancy was also occupied in trying to find suitable agents for the German and Austrian submarines to land on the African coast with the object of stirring up disaffection among the Senoussi and in Egypt itself. He was always anxious for information about the Suez Canal defences, though some of this anxiety in the autumn of 1915 and the early spring of 1916 was an attempt, I fancy, to support the rumour of a great Turko-German offensive against Egypt, with the object of keeping troops immobile there. Later on, however, he became interested in the prospect of stirring up trouble in Abyssinia, and we were luckily able to obtain possession of some of his questionnaires. But this was toward the end of 1916. Most of these activities of the German Intelligence were discovered some time after the period of which I am writing. In October, 1915, we were still splashing about in the puddles of my predecessor's information, and with the agents at our disposal it looked as if we should not succeed in being much more practical as scavengers than he had been.

I knew that old Weir had taken a good deal of trouble to keep in both with Liebig and myself until he was sure which of the two was going to remain in charge. He was the friend of a man who was an important official in the big Anatolian Society to which every refugee belonged. I cannot remember the exact name of it, but it was a semi-political, semi-friendly Society, the real object of which was to drive the Turk from Asia Minor. Men recruited from its ranks were usually to be relied upon, for they would have had short shrift from their fellow members had they played the traitor. But, while I had no doubt of the loyalty of Weir's men to the cause, I had serious doubts of their loyalty within the Bureau itself, and I soon had evidence that old Weir himself was instilling into them the poisonous habit

STAFF WORK

of wasting their time in plotting against those he considered his rivals like Tucker, Cavour, and later on Clarence, who at present, however, was lodging in Weir's house and very thick with him. I tried to persuade V to let me pay off the old man, give him notice that we no longer required the use of a part of his house, and gradually get rid of what I considered the compromised agents left on our hands. V could not bring himself to take such a drastic step and suggested that all these personal squabbles and jealousies would gradually disappear under my tactful handling. He fancied too that there were probably faults on both sides and reminded me how much trouble he himself had always had over the rivalry between Tucker and Weir.

"And I like old Weir, Z. He has done a lot of good hard work."

"I dare say he has; but I think he's a mischievous old man, and that he might from my point of view very easily become a very dangerous old man."

"Still, I *don't* think we can get rid of him. I want you to make the best of him. A little tact is what is wanted. Tucker's a good fellow, but he sometimes treads on Weir's toes."

So there was nothing for it but against my judgment to keep what I thought was likely to prove a scorpion and try to guard myself against sting. We preserved, the one with the other, a manner of *fausse bonhomie* which concealed a mutual dislike and mistrust. For many weeks I put up with his disruptive mischief-making; but in the end it became too dangerous to be tolerated any longer and I sacked him, thereby providing for myself an unscrupulous enemy whose hatred in its dark depths touched madness. I was to wish with all my heart that I had followed my instinct and refused to accept the responsibility of the work I was doing unless V agreed to dismiss Weir and most of his sub-agents before he himself left Athens. It was obvious

when I told Weir in October that I wanted to put two of the men who had been under his orders at the service of Clarence and Cavour that he could not bear the idea of parting with them. To Clarence I awarded a fair young man called Pappas of personable appearance, tall, slim, well-educated, and of some breeding. He had, as I recollect, volunteered to make a journey into Turkey for V, but for some reason or other had never managed to get there. Clarence who was as proud of Pappas as a child of a new doll used to assure me that Agent P, as he always called him, would lay down his life for him. To Cavour I allotted Chryssoverghi, a red-haired journalist, who had made two or three journeys into Turkey early in 1915 and who had been one of those engaged to do contre-espionage on the Peninsula. When suspicion had been cast upon the head man, whom I called X—in *Gallipoli Memories*, Chryssoverghi was sent back to Athens like the rest. He was not conspicuously bright, but a pleasant and industrious fellow. The removal of these two left Weir with six agents of his own and a translator. The last was a large plump man who had been the doctor to the port of Smyrna, and he was now like so many of his compatriots a refugee. He spoke French and Italian fluently, but he had not a word of English. A most lovable creature, Tsitsopoulos was as faithful and devoted a friend as any man could have had. He was also a kind and capable physician, and I needed one by me only too often during these years. Although married and the father of a family beginning to grow up, he always reminded me of an old maid, and he was rather a butt for the others. Generally he took this teasing equably enough, but sometimes he would fly into violent rages and rush round the office like a madman, being highly strung in spite of his plumpness and size. Something about me (it would be hard to say what) filled him with an excessive reverence, which he signalized by always entering and leaving my presence on

tip-toe. It was his job to prepare castor-oil when I was threatened with a return of my old trouble, and he used to come into my bedroom early in the morning with what he always vowed was a dose of castor-oil so exquisitely disguised by him as to be positively delicious and quite unrecognizable for what it was.

"*Elle est délicieuse, cette huile, mon capitaine,*" he used to declare. And then he would continue in Italian its praises. "*È proprio profumato! Squisito!*"

"Very well, Tsitsopoulos," I would answer, "if it's really so delicious as all that you shall take a dose too."

"*Ah non, mon capitaine, je n'en ai pas besoin! Davvero, signor capitano, per me sarebbe eccessivo,*" he would protest, eyeing with horror the potion, which usually looked like a cup of rose-pink milk and smelt like a mixture of what it was with face-cream.

"My dear Tsitsopoulos, unless you drink it, I won't drink it. You say it's unrecognizable as castor-oil."

"*Si, si, parole d'honneur! È una bellezza, un sogno,*" he would affirm as he pressed upon me the beauty and the dream he declared his disguised castor-oil to be.

"Then why won't you take it yourself?"

In the end rather than see me refuse to take the medicine he believed to be necessary for my health Tsitsopoulos would always sacrifice himself and gulp down as big a dose as mine. Bless his memory, that's what I call a real doctor. My last sight of him was when I left Syra in the darkness of a September gale in 1917. As the yacht turned westward by the mole of the harbour, I saw a crowd of friends waving me their last farewells; but conspicuous among them all was that large doctor, standing beneath a fluttering lamp and blubbing like a fat schoolboy. I hope he still sleeps soundly on all I had to leave him—my bed.

I made up my mind that Tsitsopoulos should be moved away from Weir's house as soon as I could obtain a proper

office, for from the first moment when I saw his round eyes with their perpetual expression of astonishment that after all he and his family had suffered they were still alive I knew he was the kind of man I wanted near myself at such a time. Yet actually it is a mistake in an organization like that to surround oneself with those who are loyal and give to others the jobs at a distance. However antipathetic they may be, it is more prudent to keep under one's own cold eye the envious and the corruptible and the false-hearted, the intriguers and the traitors, for out of sight such men have more courage to be active.

Of Weir's six other sub-agents I can only remember clearly the personalities of two. Papeconomou was a small dark man with close-cropped hair and a bilious countenance. He was the cleverest of Weir's lot, but he had a temper that was expressed by the yellowness of his complexion. He was a special pet of Weir's, and I fancy the old man was afraid of him. Anyway, he was always impressing on me the difficulty of Papeconomou's character, and how necessary it was to leave his management to the only man who understood it. At last I had occasion to put Papeconomou under the orders of Tucker for something, whereupon old Weir came fuming to me and described, clicking his fat amber beads the while as he always did, the rage of Papeconomou at being put at Tucker's disposal and the tact that would be needed to get him into a good mood again. By this time I was tired of Weir as the agent of a temperamental prima donna and even more tired of the prima donna. So I sent for Papeconomou and gave him the option of losing his job or doing it without a murmur. When the bilious little man had departed full of servile contrition, I told Weir that he would have to dispense with Papeconomou's services in future, and the old man retired, fingering his fat beads faster than ever, a false smile beneath his straggling grey moustache, a cold malevolence in his small

eyes, and here and there upon his apple cheeks a few drops of sweat that betrayed the violence of the passion he was trying to conceal.

Philandros was a schoolmaster—a mild-mannered intellectual little man with a real mastery of his own language. Had he had the will like Demosthenes to overcome a physical disability he might have achieved a comparable eloquence, for the speeches he wrote were magnificent. But he was much too timid a little man to venture upon a rostrum. In his quiet way he acquired a good deal of valuable and usually accurate information.

I remember the appearance of Christides and Economides, but nothing else about them worth setting down. Of Servos and Vlaicos I do not remember even the outward forms. Yet, if I had to pay every one of those men I have mentioned their monthly salary at this moment, I could do so without being five drachmas out. That assertion, better than anything, may suggest to the reader what a desperate struggle it was in those early days to find the necessary money to run the show. The figures of those salaries are imprinted on my memory by the number of times Tucker and I used to sit and add them up when we were doing our accounts and budgeting for the coming month's expenses.

I got rid at once of all Liebig's Maltese agents, with the exception of a very bright and plucky youth called Zammit, who was handed over to Cavour. He served us faithfully to the end, and he was to enjoy the distinction of being shot through the leg by one of the sailors in the Greek Ministry of Marine on the fatal First of December, 1916, after sallying out with some of our fellows to rescue a French soldier who was in danger of being torn to pieces by the mob in Stadium Street. As soon as Zammit was given to Cavour who already had Chryssoverghi, Clarence became jealous and wanted a second agent for himself. So to keep him quiet I promised him the services of the

loathsome agent known as Byron, though I was well aware that Byron's days with us were numbered, now that Liebig was gone. I have already described his final exit.

After that departure Clarence might be heard to ask, swelling with self-esteem :

"Who does the work in this show ? Clarence. How many sub-agents has old Weir got ? Six. How many sub-agents has fat Tucker got ? All he blooming well wants. How many sub-agents has noble Cavour got ? Two. How many sub-agents has Clarence got ? Agent P. That's all. But the genuine goods come from Clarence. The hot stuff comes from the Poor Sergeant. Ask the Skipper. He knows. 'One man is enough for you, Clarence, because you're a bloody host in yourself.' That's what the Skipper would like to tell me. But he can't tell me so, because every other poor B in the show would be puking sick with jealousy if he did. But they know that the only one who earns his pay is Clarence. With me ? It's a go. Without me ? It's a washout. Well, look at the way they're all afraid of me in Athens. Last night I went down to the Gents' at the Panhellenion and looked over the top at the man who was busy in the next division to what I was. When he saw me looking at him, he turned deathily white and rushed out of the place. Never adjusted his dress or nothing. Then I looked over at the man on the other side of me. And he shrunk. He shrunk right down. Shrunk up to nothing. Why ? Because, though I'm only the Sergeant, without Me this show is nothing. Ask Captain Zed. He'll soon tell you."

My authority for these speeches of one who had something in him of Falstaff, something of Pistol, was Moon. 'O Moon of my delight that knows no wane.' Thus at any moment might I have addressed him, for he was a perpetual joy and help in the most discouraging circumstances. Moon was one of the two Warrant Officers with the British Naval

Mission, both of whom while in Greece held the rank of Lieutenant. Moon did not revert from commissioned rank when he left Greece, and he retired from the Navy as Lieutenant-Commander. He was a Gunner. His father had been a Gunner. His grandfather had been a Gunner. His great-grandfather had been a Gunner and fought at Trafalgar. His great-great uncle had been Codrington's Gunner at Navarino. His head was as round as a cannon ball and his face as ruddy as the full October moon rising. Nobody ever had a more appropriate surname. In his laugh was all the metal of all the guns he and his ancestors had served, in his character all their founding. Pompey was his home, and in him Pompey was incarnate. Yet, somehow somewhere into this martial stock a strain of the mummer had entered. What the quarter-deck had gained the stage had lost. Hence his ability always to cheer me with some tale of Clarence illustrated by a rich imitation of his gross absurdity.

Moon was living in the *Hydra*, which was a small Greek cruiser moored at the Piræus as a school of gunnery. His official duties as instructor were over by the end of the afternoon, and knowing that we were at our wits' end for clerical help he volunteered to come in every day about five and put in some work till dinner-time and afterwards if he were wanted. He had a bold round hand as clear as print, which perfectly expressed his personality, and I jumped at his offer. Tucker already had far more writing than he could manage with all the running about he had, and almost every night about twelve he had to sit in front of a rickety old typewriter and somehow get down on paper what I dictated often until two and three and even four in the morning. Every week there would be long letters to Graves and Deedes at G.H.Q. and every day reports of the current work to be typed out for V. Besides this I was much occupied with the appreciation and analysis of the hetero-

geneous scraps of information which never seemed to stop coming in. Hasluck had enough to do in keeping up to date with the cards. Old Weir's men handed in their reports to Tsitsopoulos who put them down on paper in French, which often meant that I would have to translate them a step further into English. Clarence and Cavour wrote out their own reports, luckily for us in clear hands. There were endless accounts to check, for Tucker and I had to fight for every drachma which was charged to the sub-agents' out-of-pocket expenses. Weir could have been helpful here, but the nature of the courier was too strong in him, and he encouraged his own men to try to grab every halfpenny they could. I thought I was overworked during that October. If I had known what the work was going to be like next year when for days at a stretch, with the thermometer round about 90° and in one week reaching 110° in the shade, I was going to be busy from eight in the morning till three at least the following morning, and often longer, I should have called October, 1915, a holiday.

Of course it was not all writing. If it had been, even my capacity for endurance would not have been enough, and I should probably not be writing these words now. But, writing or not, existence was a ceaseless strain on the nerves, and, seldom completely free from pain, I was often in agony. All through October we were endeavouring without the least success to get together the nucleus of an efficient secret-service. Of the agents Byron and Jack Horner I have already spoken. There was another fellow who came full of promises and who was so loud in praise of his own truthfulness that I called him George Washington. He lasted about a month before I got rid of him as useless. Then there was Robert Macaire who lasted a long time. His chief business was to bring me daily the talk of the town, for he was a man who knew everybody and was able to write excellent character sketches of public individuals. It was

on him I would rely for an appreciation of the personalities that went to form a new Government. He was a valuable level-headed man, so valuable that I did not want to destroy his utility on private inquiry work, and to call him a secret agent is to stretch the term absurdly.

I was already beginning to fancy that the importance of Schenck was exaggerated, and I was sick of the stream of seedy and voluble rascals who, claiming to be in the Baron's confidential employment, professed themselves anxious to reveal everything to me for a consideration. I had no doubt that the same rascals were making similar offers to the Baron. But try as we might we could not succeed in genuinely piercing the German organization at any point. We heard of a commission-agent at the Piræus called Hoffmann, and the more we heard of him, the more important I began to suspect he was. But the shadow of the Baron lay over everything and occupied the imagination of everybody so that much valuable time was wasted in trying to establish the links between Schenck and Hoffmann, links which never existed as it turned out later, though I was right in my early suspicions of Hoffmann's importance, for when at last in September, 1916, we landed him on Malta we could boast that we had hooked the biggest salmon in the Eastern Mediterranean. He sent agent after agent through Italy with impunity, because though we were able to warn the Italians of something like a dozen of them, in one case being actually able to say that the vital paper would be found between the leather of the agent's boots, the Italians did not succeed in implicating any, so clumsy or so unscrupulous were their methods. I do them an injustice. One agent who was false to Hoffmann, and through whom I hoped to find the clearing-house in Switzerland of his information, was arrested by the Italians and kept in jail for several weeks in spite of all Colonel Mombelli's requests for his immediate release. The truth was the civil

authorities in Italy were so jealous of the military authorities that except perhaps for a time at Messina it was unnecessary to impute a taint of Germanism to their motives. The mere fact that warnings were sent through Colonel Mombelli prejudiced the police from the start. To add to the nuisance of the whole business the civil authorities never allowed the military authorities to communicate directly with us through Colonel Mombelli, but insisted on carrying on the correspondence through our Ambassador in Rome, Sir Rennel Rodd, who naturally grew extremely bored with what he might fairly consider were matters quite outside the province of an Ambassador in time of war.

But what was more important to pierce than anything else during that autumn was the German Legation itself, for until we could do that I knew we should be incapable of giving any kind of correct estimate about the trend of German activities. On one of my surviving scraps of paper I find noted under the date of October 19th :

V says de Grancy told a friend yesterday that out of 130 English agents in Athens 30 came to see him every day. V wants two of our most trustworthy men put on for a few days to see whether any of our people do actually go and see de Grancy. From same source V hears that Falkenhause is back.

To do what V wanted would have meant watching de Grancy's house which happened to be close to old Weir's house, and since nearly all our available agents spent half their time chattering and gossiping there it would have been impossible without employing new men to watch de Grancy's house and escape the notice of Weir's agents, among whom if anywhere these alleged visitors must be sought. It would also have meant watching the German Legation with two other new men, and shadowing de Grancy himself with a couple more.

STAFF WORK

But what was much more exasperating about this kind of fatuous communication than V's request to do something that was quite outside feasibility with the means at our disposal was our conviction that the King and his friends were being fed with this rubbish* about one hundred and thirty English agents at large in Athens. I saw only too clearly that the precious Palace police, as they were called, would soon be strengthened to deal with this imaginary menace, and I wanted facts with which to counter the fictions they would soon be spreading.

At the end of October the necessity of finding out more about the Germans in Athens was redoubled by alarming tales everywhere of German officers arriving. The concentration of the Greek Army was proceeding rapidly. Leave had been refused to the British troops to occupy the Doiran station on the Serbian frontier. The situation at Salonica was beginning to look ugly, and rumours that the possibility of attacking the Allies was being seriously considered hovered over Athens like vultures. Sir Francis Elliot told V that it was vital for him to know positively whether German officers were or were not arriving in Athens. It should be remembered that the Russian ultimatum to Bulgaria had finally been provoked by the arrival of German officers in Sofia. It might be that the Germans or the Germanophile Greeks were trying by the spread of rumours to provoke an ultimatum from the Entente and so precipitate war. It might even be that German officers really were arriving in Athens. On October 24th a British transport was sunk by a submarine outside the harbour of Salonica. The Royalist Press proclaimed that the Allies would never succeed in landing any more of their 150,000 troops. The atmosphere was electric. Prominent Venizelists declared positively that the King intended to go to

* The anti-Venizelist writers still give currency to such rubbish, repeating the same lies one after the other as ducks quack or infants gabble the A B C.

war, and those German officers grew more numerous every hour.

With no way of obtaining outside information the only thing we could do was to muster all our scanty forces and concentrate on watching night and day the German Legation, the Larissa railway-station, and the house where Falkenhausen and de Grancy lived. If these German officers really were in Athens, some sign of them must be seen at one or other of those places. In order to work the three-hour shifts of invigilation I had to call on everybody. Poor dear fat Tsitsopoulos was doomed to spend nine hours of the day and night for three days and nights holding up a lamp-post near the German Legation. Nor was flat-footed Joseph exempt. He held up another. Even Moon spent the nights in watches with Tucker down at the Pension Merlin, ready to rush up and fetch me down from the School if a strange German officer showed his moustache in Athens. Old Weir was excused the fatigue of watching ; but he was at his best on occasions like this, for the good courier came to the fore and he devoted himself to feeding the exhausted watchers when they came off duty for a rest.

It was hard work, and of course it was an extremely clumsy way of getting the information we wanted ; but it was the only way of checking the wild rumours current, and it was a satisfaction to be able to state positively that there were no German officers in Athens. We had our reward too, for V was encouraged by what seemed a definite proof of the ability of his local Intelligence and authorized me to accept Erskine's offer to lend us his Sunbeam if we would pay the wages of Markham the chauffeur.

Tucker, in spite of his bulk being slightly reduced by three almost sleepless nights, swelled so much with exultation at the prospect of driving in the Sunbeam as to give the impression of being about to burst.

STAFF WORK

"Now we've got the car, Captain Z, I think there's a chance I may get my commission next, don't you?"

"That must certainly be our next objective, Tucker," I agreed.

CHAPTER XII

HOUSES AND PEOPLE

I AM ill-equipped to celebrate worthily the technical virtues of that Sunbeam, for besides being unable to drive a car myself I lack the taste and knowledge to appreciate the finer points of any mechanism. The horsepower, I believe, was 14-15, and I know that it was an open roadster which seemed lower than the average car. The colour when we first enjoyed the use of it was the grey of a battleship. It was not intended to hold more than five people including the chauffeur ; but many a time it had to make journeys over the worst of roads carrying seven and sometimes eight passengers. It had to wait for hours in blinding sun, in driving rain, in bitter cold ; and never once did it fail without reason to start immediately it was called upon to do so. It drove me at a snail's pace through a howling mob. It drove me like the wind past an ambush on the road to Eleusis, so fast that only one bullet struck the screen. It saved my life by the cunning way in which it drove my feigned self to a house and brought back that feigned self hidden under a rug so that it appeared to return empty, thus leading the assassins to suppose I was in the house they shot to pieces early next morning. It drove me down to the Piræus when I finally left Athens, riding in the back seat while a Royalist officer who had been provided to guarantee my safe conduct shivered beside the chauffeur, he being convinced that he would be shot from a housetop by some Venizelist bravo. It crossed in a steamer to Syra and was ready to drive me as tactfully as ever the

moment it disembarked on the quay. For two years all but a month it drove many sorts and conditions of humanity all day and every day, and often all night too. It drove through summer dust which turned the occupants to the similitude of clay figures, through thick mud that made it look as if it had been dragged up from the bottom of a marsh. And all that time the Sunbeam never once failed for one minute to behave as if it was a car which had just passed its first driving test. It watched not unkindly, for it was a car with a naturally beautiful disposition, the detestable behaviour of an Overland which, after bragging in an American accent about the superiority of its own self-starter to the Sunbeam's handle in front, used to stand and jib like a mule without starting at all. It watched one February night a Ford collapse with a broken back in the middle of a crowded street of the Piræus, and it drove home to Athens all the occupants of the Ford without the least sign of complacency. There was only one occasion on which the Sunbeam refused to start immediately, and that was when some ill-wisher had loosened a wheel with the idea of smashing me up. But the Sunbeam was one too many for the rascal. It had as much sagacity as Jingle's pointer who would not pass the notice-board which said the gamekeeper had orders to shoot all dogs found in that enclosure. Only when the loose wheel was noticed and tightened up would the Sunbeam start. There may be cars to-day as good as that Sunbeam of what I suppose was the 1914 vintage, for Erskine had had the car some time when we took it on. If there be such good cars, I felicitate the owners of them a little enviously, for I am sure I shall never be able to afford to buy one and find out for myself. Nor am I ever likely to be in a position to test the pampered cars of peace as I tested that veteran. Most regrettably, a week or two before I left Syra in the autumn of 1917, one of my subalterns backed the Sunbeam too fast into the garage and inflicted

considerable damage on it. But the damage was not so very serious, and when I was informed in London that my next job would be the creation of an Intelligence Organization in Tunis and Tripoli, the first thing for which I asked was the Sunbeam. As it fell out bad health prevented my going to North Africa, but had I gone there with the Sunbeam, not for long would the antipathetic camel have kept its title of 'ship of the desert.' My Sunbeam would have been the ship of the desert then. I rejoice to think that I drove in it once to Marathon. That was the heroic setting such a car deserved.

There comes back to me, in connexion with the loan of the Sunbeam to the organization until the purchase of it was sanctioned by London, a walk with Erskine to interview his chauffeur Markham, who with his wife was looking after the house Erskine had vacated, to go and live up at the Director's house with Wace, when Mrs. Erskine and the two little girls had returned home from Athens.

The day was fine, and when we entered that garden which held the benign October sunshine in its lap I became deliciously remote from the garishness of modern Athens, remote from the glittering thin-walled houses with their excessively varnished doors, remote from the feverish overwrought existence of the present, and in fancy I was back in Italy before the war. The furniture in Erskine's empty house strengthened this illusion, for much of it was typically Italian, a relic of his time as Secretary of Embassy in Rome, the post he had enjoyed best in his diplomatic career. He told me now that he was going to keep the house as it was, because he was hoping to move on from Athens fairly soon and find himself back in Rome as Counsellor of Embassy, when all the furniture could return to its proper setting. We wandered round the deserted rooms, talking of the civilized joys of Italy, of the Embassy's summer retreat at Posillipo, of the Roman fountains and the

HOUSES AND PEOPLE

Borghese pines, and of that mellow and serene life which could be spent in Rome before the war, but which now between red taxis and black shirts is less easily achieved. The incident of this visit to an empty house may seem too trivial to be recalled in such detail; but, when a picture rises in my mind to symbolize the break in the continuity of culture the war made, it is of Erskine's empty house in Athens with that Italian furniture surviving from a lost world. Forsaken thus in Italy itself, it would not have been so poignant a reminder of the break which by the end of 1915 people of my generation and the generations before were beginning to realize was a much more tremendous break than they had thought at first. In Italy the furniture would have receded gracefully into the past like other old-fashioned things; but here against the inappropriate background of modern Athens the sense of abandonment it conveyed was acute, and equally the sense of an almost unseemly survival. Yet Erskine himself managed better than most people to appear untouched by the time's disturbance. Partly of course this was due to that awareness of impermanence which must affect the outlook of any diplomat in mid-career. He is always as it were in transit between China and Peru. Still, Erskine's apparent immunity from any effects of the violent change of war was exceptional. Since 1913 he had been the British Delegate on the International Financial Commission in Athens. On that the war had had no influence beyond making the greetings between the Delegates on different sides more coldly ceremonious and formal than they would otherwise have been. For two or three mornings or afternoons every week the Commission had been sitting since long before August 1914, and for all I know it may be sitting yet. No event in Athens ever interrupted one of its sessions. It was dealing with the Greek debt, I think; but I never had the curiosity to ascertain what was the procedure

of the investigation nor even what was its ultimate aim.

In the Legation Erskine had a little room to himself, a cul-de-sac opening out of the Chancery, lined from floor to ceiling with the archives. It was the kind of dim dusty little room you might see in the offices of an old firm of solicitors in Lincoln's Inn, with shelves of calf-bound quartos, and quires of blue paper tied up with red tape stacked between the ceiling and the topmost shelf. There was really only room for the Counsellor himself, and for the Counsellor's desk and chair and pipe, though a couple of visitors could just manage to sit and talk to him if one of them sat well back in the window recess. Two or three times a week Erskine would emerge from this burrow and announce that he must go down to the Commission. And if we looked from the Chancery window we would see him in his grey-lined flannel suit and straw Homburg hat turning round the corner and vanishing in the sunshine beyond the trees of the square. A trivial reminiscence? Not so. In that feverish and irregular existence of Athens in 1916 the calm and regular departure of Erskine for the offices of the Commission became for me a blessed assurance that one day we might all of us return to normal life. It is possible to feel as much imprisoned by excitement as by dullness.

But the object of that visit to Erskine's house was not to moralize on the effect of war so much as to interview his chauffeur, who had married Mrs. Erskine's maid, a handsome Italian woman with opulent auburn hair of the true Titian quality. Markham himself was a little man who always spoke in a plaintive Cockney accent, which was redeemed from anything like a whine by the note of beautiful optimism that pervaded it, and which was raised to something like music by the sweet charity of his outlook on life. Even when he was pulled out of the

Overland car on the fatal First of December and dragged off to the police-station by a band of Reservist ruffians he could not bring himself to condemn their conduct with any epithet stronger than 'harsh.'

"The Venizelists was all right, sir, but these here Royalists as they call them, they *was* a bit harsh."

Thus he related his experience when he rejoined us in Syra.

"I'm afraid Mrs. Markham will be getting jealous if you're kept out like this every night," I said to him once when the little man had been having a week of nocturnal driving.

"Yes, sir, she *has* commented on me coming back at all hours as you might say. Still, what I say is anybody ought to feel grateful that they've got anybody who *can* feel jealous about them. That's what I feel."

Markham could not bear to disappoint anybody. On one occasion when the Sunbeam was occupied I sent down word that the Overland was to come round for me at once. Presently Markham arrived.

"You wanted the Overland at once, sir?"

"Yes, have you brought it round?"

"Yes, sir, at least no, sir, not quite round."

"It's all right, isn't it?"

"Oh yes, sir. Oh yes, sir, yes, it's quite all *right*."

"The new tyres are all right?"

"Oh yes, sir, the tyres are all right. The left front tyre is a bit wonkified. You know, sir: the outer cover's a bit ripped up. And the right front tyre, well, the inner tube I'm a bit afraid of. In fact it isn't really there at all in a way of speaking. It seemed to burst itself all up. But both back tyres are all right except that the right hand one is perished a bit. But the car's quite all *right*."

"You think you can drive me down to Phaleron in it?"

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

"To Phaleron, sir? Well, perhaps not quite as far as that. In fact I think till the new tyres come the car had really better remain in the garage."

"Then the new tyres aren't on?"

"No, sir; well, they haven't come yet. Mr. Tucker was going to give the fellow we ordered them from a bit of his mind."

"In other words I can't have the Overland this afternoon?"

"No, sir. That's right, sir. Looking at it that way you really can't have it. Well, sir, even with the new tyres she'll want a thorough good overhauling before she can go out again."

Erskine and I used to wonder how Markham ever managed to make his wife understand that he wanted to marry her, for she spoke hardly any English, and he not a word of Italian. I maintained that his patient optimism must have pierced the most apparently impenetrable barriers of language. Erskine suspected that Mrs. Markham had married *him*.

However brought about, it was certainly a most happy marriage, for Markham himself was a romantic and appreciated the privilege of being the husband of such a handsome and temperamental woman.

"I should find England very dull after seeing what places really are, sir. When the war's over, I've made up my mind to live abroad for good and all. Well, anybody isn't cramped the way they are in England. Well, a man wants to live his life, as the saying goes. I don't hold with cooping oneself up, I don't."

This bold declaration of a human being's right to live in the fullest sense of the word, though uttered in a high plaintive Cockney voice, rang out impressively, for the little man himself, with his Venetian bride and imperturbable dignity under the most trying conditions, transcended

easily the handicap of what could not by even the most imaginative and sympathetic observer be considered anything but a comical exterior.

Well, thanks to Erskine the Sunbeam was put at our disposal in return for our accepting full responsibility for its upkeep, in which were included the wages of Markham, and a promise to take the car off him at £400 as soon as the money could be extracted from London, which, incidentally took six months ! All that Erskine himself got out of the transaction at first was the advantage of being driven up with Wace and myself to our daily lunch at the Director's house.

Even with the Sunbeam at our disposal the inconvenience of keeping my own office away up at the British School became too much to be borne and, an opportunity to take on Goodhart's rooms at 3 Visarionos Street arising, V authorized us to make the move. Visarionos was a quiet little street joining Sina Street, where the latter ran past the University Gardens, to Homer Street, which was one of those long streets mounting gradually the lower slopes of Lycabettus. Number Three was an old house which had managed to survive when the rest of the street was built up on modern lines. The houses on either side of it were of the usual urban pattern, and it was only their whiteness which would have made them conspicuous amid the uniformity of a London suburb. They were all three storeys high and so exactly alike that the one which displayed in a first-floor window a canary in a gilded cage gained by just that distinction a rich individuality of its own. Most of them had big varnished doors, because most of them were divided into two apartments, and the architect seemed to have supposed that a door used by two families ought to be larger than a door used by one. Number Three, with double-fronted single storey and large basement, crusty-brown pantiles, yellow-plastered heavy stone walls, and

faded blue jalousies gave to the long faces of its stereotyped neighbours an expression of mournful disapproval as if they could hardly bear this gypsy rebel that refused to come into line. Nor could they impinge upon its independence, for the thickness of the stone walls gave it all the advantage of a detached house.

Goodhart had only taken the three rooms in front, a minute bedroom on the left of the narrow passage and two rooms equally minute on the other side which opened out of one another. The furniture was not attractive, consisting mostly of bamboo jardinières and tripod tables and hideously foliated chairs with green plush seats. But what did give the rooms a certain character was the way in which some previous occupant had draped the walls with cretonne hangings of the Tree of Life pattern, and not merely the walls, but the windows and doors as well, so that at night nothing was to be seen around one except that pattern of teeming barbaric life endlessly repeated in blood-red and powder-blue. It was the sort of suite which you would have expected to find tenanted by a palmist.

Goodhart was too much the *boulevardier* to trouble about his domestic comfort. Beyond sleeping and taking his breakfast there Visarionos Street had seen little of him. When Tucker and I inspected the house we found that, though Goodhart had been the only lodger, there were three or four more rooms at the back which we should have to take if we wanted absolute privacy. So I decided that in spite of the larger amenity and peace of the British School Tucker and I would live at Number Three. The house was really too convenient to be lost, for right at the back there was a barrack of a room where we should be able to have our men on duty day and night, and at the same time get them away from old Weir's influence. Another advantage of the house was the sizable garden which prevented our being overlooked.

HOUSES AND PEOPLE

The owner himself did not live on his property, and the tenants were looked after by Lisa, an old lady who inhabited the basement where she received many visits from friends and relations, but not in the least so as to interfere with the floor above. I have called Lisa an old lady, and inasmuch as she had almost white hair and was over sixty I suppose she was an old lady. Yet she had grown old so exquisitely that she reminded me of the fairy godmother who assumes the appearance of age, but whose eternal fairy youth, one feels, must have been perceptible to those she favoured with her patronage. Lisa's cheeks had the delicate bloom of an autumnal rose and her face was still as demurely pretty as a china shepherdess, with a delicately moulded profile and clear blue eyes. Her figure was as trim as a girl's, and she had the most beautiful little feet, of which more than anything she was really vain, always buying for herself the neatest shoes and the best black silk stockings. About the house she used to wear black dresses with frilly aprons in the evenings like the French maid of bygone farces ; but she dressed herself gaily when she went out, and the first time I met her coming home from market on a sparkling winter's day and saw her blushing beneath a flowery hat she might have been a Greuze. She may sound as I have described her like an old woman coquetting in rather an unseemly way with her former self. This was not so. She talked of herself as an old woman, and used the privilege of age to speak her mind or tell a worldly tale not fit for the lips of a maid. One of her first steps when we went to live at Number Three was to depose flat-footed Joseph from his job as valet and assume the care of everything, including of course my clothes. Joseph bore her no malice for this. Indeed, he spoke of her with a reverence touched with awe.

"*Quella Lisa sa fare tutto, signore mio. Lisa can to do what we want. È molto brava.*"

So from being my valet Joseph became the janitor of Number Three, sitting most of the day in the gloomy little entrance passage except when Lisa was ordering him about on some domestic job, when his place was taken by a rugged old Levantine mariner called Travlos, who shared with Joseph the responsibility of keeping out unwelcome visitors.

Tsitsopoulos, too, much to his delight was hustled round by Lisa, his benevolent face glowing as he assumed an air of terrific apprehensiveness when she became impatient with his masculine imbecility.

Conversation between Lisa and myself was never fluent, because though she was under the impression that she spoke French well, her French consisted of about fifty words without ability to put together a sentence of any kind.

"Joseph bon. Oui. Mais homme non bon faire choses. Bon ouvrez porte."

That was how she disposed of Joseph's claims to wait upon myself.

As for my Greek it remained in much the same state as Lisa's French, and though I could soon understand most of what was being said I never admitted I could, and in any case Lisa was much too proud of her French ever to condescend to talking to me in her own language. Yet her devotion to myself was so complete and my gratitude to her so constant that, looking back across the years, I am aware of a perfect intimacy, little as either of us could ever say to the other by the world's standard of intercourse.

Lisa stayed with me all the time I was in Greece. When we moved from Number Three to another house she came too, and thence to every house in turn until the end of 1916 when she came with me to Syra. She never seemed to sleep. If I arrived home at three in the morning, worn out by some long expedition over vile roads, I would hear underneath faint sounds as of a mouse moving in the wainscot,

and a minute later Lisa in a saxe-blue velvet dressing-gown and a lace night-cap would put her head round the door and say :

"Cocoa. Toute suite. Cocoa très bon."

When I was racked with neuritis she would search Athens for unguents and medicaments, and occasionally even bring astonishing-looking women with a reputation for magic and herbs to see what they could do. She much approved of Tsitsopoulos luckily, and my habit of making the poor doctor share the dose he had prescribed delighted her immoderately, so that she would dance about the room and clap her hands while Tsitsopoulos swallowed the oil with grimaces.

The parting with Lisa on that tempestuous autumn night in Syra was hard. She had busied herself with my packing during the previous few days ; but she had not said a word of my going away. To Tsitsopoulos I had bequeathed my bed. To Lisa I bequeathed the rest of my furniture, which included a large wardrobe of which she had always been intensely proud and fond. Tucker who, probably, to keep up his own spirits, had to be boisterously cheerful during those days, assured me that Lisa was like a dog with two tails over the gift of the furniture and was intending to furnish a little house in Athens and let rooms to bachelors. And I who had lately experienced some disappointments over the loyalty of people I had cared for and trusted was in the mood to believe that the wardrobe would be more than a good substitute for myself. But when I went aboard Lisa came down into my cabin to make sure for the last time that a bed was as it should be for my comfort. Suddenly I saw that she who was always such a little thing seemed to be tinier than ever, and when I put my arms round her to kiss her good-bye I found that she was hardly heavier than a flower as she drooped in the rain of her own tears.

"Jamais plus," she sobbed. "Vous jamais plus. Lisa jamais plus vous voir."

To the last she refused to speak anything but that absurd broken French, even to express her conviction that she should never see me again.

I had to leave her sobbing down in the cabin, for there were many others to whom I had to say good-bye before we sailed; and the last I saw of her was on the gusty mole standing near Tsitsopoulos and waving a small lace handkerchief as the yacht swept by westward into the gale. If she be still alive, Lisa will be a very old woman now, approaching eighty; but even so she will be young, and she will still wear about her that fragrant air of romance and she will still be vain of her beautiful little feet.

And to show I am not embroidering my own sentimental fancies upon Lisa's personality I will tell a story about her. In 1917 the Greek Archbishop of Syra came to consult me about his political future. A Greek Archbishop when he walks abroad with his pastoral staff and his attendant deacon is usually an imposing figure. But Athanasius of Syra, Tenos, Andros, Kea and Melos was magnificently worthy of that crown engraved upon his visiting-card. He was a very tall man with flashing eyes and flowing hair, a superb profile, and a beard of Zeus-like majesty. In his black robes and high black hat he looked to ordinary mortals as the great Agrippa to the little inky boys. It was Lisa who opened the door to him, Lisa, the top of whose grey head did not reach as high as the end of his grey beard.

"Lisa!" the Archbishop exclaimed.

And she answered him softly by the name of his youth.

Afterwards she told me in her broken French the story. Forty years earlier when the Archbishop was a theological student, and before he had taken the vows of celibacy which have to be taken by those who in the Greek Church aspire to become more than simple parish priests, the Archbishop

HOUSES AND PEOPLE

and Lisa had lived together for a time. Then both had gone their ways, he to become ultimately Athanasius of Syra, Tenos, Andros, Kea, and Melos, she to an unmarried old age. They had not seen each other till Lisa opened the door for him that afternoon.

"Lisa," he had half whispered, "your hair is quite grey."

"Et vous tout gris," she told me she had answered, and that when answering she had stroked that sublime beard. And as she related the scene Lisa's cheeks were flushed to the lively crimson of a girlish blush.

"J'étais comme femme, vous savez," she added, her eyes very bright with the memory of what she assured me had been a really great love affair. I was reminded of dear Miss Matty's love affair of long ago in *Cranford*, though I doubt Miss Matty was more prudent with Mr. Holbrook than Lisa had allowed herself to be with Athanasius of Syra, Tenos, Andros, Kea, and Melos.

To return to 3 Visarionos Street where Lisa was in charge. Tucker and I were not able to move into our new offices as soon as we expected, for by the time Goodhart had vacated his rooms circumstances arose which postponed our move for a month. I was sorry at the prospect of losing Goodhart from Athens. His conversation at the Panhellenion Café when I found myself at his table after a weary day was refreshing in its complete inconsequence. It was sweet and fizzing like sherbert and as completely unintoxicating. My last memory of being in his company is on the eve of All Hallows when we had just disposed of the myth that German officers were arriving in Athens to precipitate a crisis. The United States battleship *Tennessee* had anchored in the Piræus, and instead of mythical German officers Athens was full of American sailors who were yelling about the city, all of them obstreperously drunk, prohibition being already in force on board American warships.

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

When I entered the Panhellenion about midnight I found the First Secretary with one of the officers in mufti.

"Commander Dash of the *Tennessee*," said Goodhart, introducing me. "This is Mackenzie whom you wanted to meet."

"Mr. Mackenzie, I am very glad to meet you," said the Commander, fixing me with an eye that was like the sea in a foggy calm and speaking in the deliberate voice of one who is determined to shake hands with the right person and remember that he has done so. "Mr. Mackenzie, you are a writer. What will you have? Did you say a coffee? No, sir. I did not come ashore to meet a writer and drink coffee with him. Waiter, bring us a bottle of champagne, the same as last time."

"Mr. Mackenzie," the Commander continued, when the wine was poured out, "I am raising my glass to you first because you are a friend of my very good friend Mr. Goodhart, who is joining with me in celebrating the occasion of my landing in this historic city. Secondly I raise my glass to you because you look to me a regular fellow; but chiefly I raise my glass to you, Mr. Mackenzie, because you are a writer, and as a writer you will appreciate the plot for a novel which I cannot write but which *you* can write and which you *will* write when I have told it to you. I am not a writer, Mr. Mackenzie, but I have a very great appreciation of literature, and I have no hesitation in telling you, sir, that the plot I am going to give you for a novel which you can write and which I cannot write is the finest darned story you ever heard."

At this moment Tucker came up with a word in my ear about something.

"Mr. Mackenzie," said the Commander, "far be it from me to interrupt a private conversation, but if this is a friend of yours he is a friend of mine, and as such he must sit and drink with me and have the pleasure of hearing what with-

out any doubt is the finest plot for a novel that he has ever heard."

"Mr. Tucker—Commander Dash."

"Mr. Tucker, what is yours? Mr. Tucker, I am about to provide Mr. Mackenzie with a plot for a novel which I venture to think will far exceed any previous conception of his should he be able, as I am convinced he will be, to make his pen keep pace with the grandeur of the theme."

"Oh, I am sure he will," said Tucker, whose naturally amiable attitude was only slightly accentuated by recognition of the Commander's being in no condition to suffer contradiction, and who at the same time was equally determined to express a perfect faith in myself.

"Wait a minute, Mr. Tucker. You say you are sure he will. Pardon me, if I take you up on that point. You cannot be sure, Mr. Tucker, until you have heard the plot for this novel. This is no ordinary plot, Mr. Tucker. This is the greatest story in the world, which you are going to hear. And I make so bold as to believe that when you have heard it, Mr. Tucker, your brain will be in a whirl at the stoopendous magnitude of the theme, which is at this very moment actually whirling about in my head, because I know the story, but you do not know the story and Mr. Mackenzie does not know the story and Mr. Goodhart does not know the story. But do not worry, Mr. Tucker, you shall certainly hear it."

Tucker assumed an expression of reverend curiosity and gazing soulfully across the table at the Commander awaited the revelation. At that moment, however, the party was joined by the American Vice-Consul in Athens, a delightful fellow whose name defiantly eludes my recollection. He was in no mood to let the Commander proceed with the plot, having just returned from a party at which he had been successful in teaching a party of Greek soldiers, with whom in some mysterious way his fortunes had

become linked in the course of the evening, to sing the college song of the University of Virginia, his *alma mater*.

"I tell you, Mackenzie, it moved me to hear those boys trolling out the old song. Damn it, I don't mind confessing I had tears in my eyes. And they were so glad I'd taught it to them that when I was taking the steam-tram back to Athens they came and presented me with two bouquets. Yes, sir, they pushed these bouquets of carnations through the window, and I tell you, Mackenzie, it moved me very much. I thought that was just lovely of those boys. And they taught me one of their old dances. I forget what it's called. But everybody joins hands and you swing back and forth. It was a very very congenial evening."

And then before the Commander could get launched again upon the plot of that novel and before Waller—yes, I think that was the name of this most sympathetic of vice-consuls—could demonstrate the superiority of the college song of the University of Virginia above all other college songs by standing up on his chair and singing it to the frequenters of the café, Goodhart was off on a sentimental reminiscence of his own.

"It was years ago, my dear man, when I was a junior Attaché in the Service. I loved her madly. You know the gardens below the Kursaal at Wiesbaden? We used to sit there on a seat every night. She came from one direction, and I came from the other. And then one night she never came, and when I went home to my rooms I found a note to say that all was over between us. I don't mind telling you I cried. Yes, I cried. I did really. Youth, youth!"

"That's what I felt to-night when I heard those dear folk singing the song of my old University," said Waller. "And when they brought me those bouquets of carnations and pushed them in through the window of the steam-tram, well, I believe I could have cried."

"Youth!" Goodhart sighed again in rapturous melan-

choly, flashing his hands to remind him that they were still untouched by age.

"Youth!" echoed Waller, who was still several years on the safe side of thirty.

And then somehow Goodhart and the American Vice-Consul faded out and left the Commander on our hands, which looked like proving a considerable responsibility when he began pulling out rolls of notes and assuring us that nothing would induce him to go back on board his ship until breakfast-time. He had forgotten all about the plot of that novel by now and perhaps inspired by Goodhart's reminiscence of Wiesbaden felt only a longing to lay his heart at the feet of some lady. We did not think it wise to let him go wandering off by himself with all that money. So, as I remember, the evening ended for me by leaving Tucker in charge of him with instructions to see him safe on board in the morning.

It was a pale Tucker who sat down to work next day.

"Coo!" he exclaimed. "He kept me sitting at the Panhellenion till half-past seven. He's a jolly good sort, but I kept dropping off to sleep in my chair, and he hardly stopped talking for a single moment."

From another evening at the Panhellenion comes back the memory of dining there with Sir Edward Boyle who had been British Commissioner in Serbia for the administration of the Relief Fund and with whom I had had my usual argument over the part that was being played by Greece in the Balkan situation. I could not bear then, and I cannot bear now to hear Greece criticized. The truth is we fall in love with these Balkan countries and become hypersensitive about them. The phenomenon of Britons falling in love with Balkan states is recurrent, and the affair is usually a passionate one. I suppose the first thing that allures us is their smallness. They can be grasped as a whole; they can be held, as it were, in an imaginative

embrace. Moreover, there is about all of them the charm of women in the making. Browning could fall in love with Italy. Her name was graven upon his heart. But who could fall in love with the hard-eyed matron that is modern Italy? It is true that France has somehow managed to preserve for the rest of the world an eternal attraction; but like her own women she offers the male such solid advantages of feminine society as good housekeeping and a civilized domesticity. And it is not with France herself, but with the idea of France that people fall in love, or perhaps with which they think they ought to fall in love if they do not want to be suspected of abnormal impulses.

But the Balkan states are in a different category. They still attract as individual women not as woman. One of the aspirations of the individual human being is a background against which he will not be lost. The easiest way to gratify this is by keeping a dog (preferably a spaniel) which will devote its existence to providing a background for its master. Winning the love of a woman is a more ambitious attempt to create for oneself an illusion of one's own importance. Women themselves seem curiously independent of this craving for a background, for which reason it is tempting to prophesy that they will ultimately become the stronger sex if the world continues to move along the lines it is taking now. The world of insects offers us enough examples of this, whether in the social existence of the hive or in the solitary and ruthless life of the spider and the mantis. However, we have not yet surrendered to that complete annihilation of individuality, and the Balkan states still provide for the foreigner who is a member of some vast organization like the British Commonwealth or the United States an opportunity to escape from the shoal in which he swims. When a Briton, whatever his social status or personal ability, finds himself in a small country, he expands. His ability to grasp the whole of his

environment enriches him as love enriches a man, because in the act of becoming aware of his own importance to the loved object that loved object itself becomes infinitely more precious.

Most of the Philhellenes (and it is significant that Greece alone can provide a legitimate word to express the state of being her lover) have fallen in love with the glory that was Greece before ever they came there and loved Greece for herself. Hence, the most fervid advocates of the Greek point of view have usually been scholars, historians, and antiquarians. I should never pretend that I was not originally prejudiced on behalf of Greece by the past glory of her; but that would finally have gone the way of all purely sentimental inclinations if I had not beheld the selflessness of those patriots, who, believing in an ideal, sacrificed everything to make it a reality. Of those who went northward to fight in Macedonia, blindly trusting to the inner call of faith, it may be sung as Simonides sang of those who fell at Thermopylae:

ἀνδρῶν ἀγαθῶν ὅδε σαρὸς
οἰκίτιν εὐδοξίαν
Ἑλλάδος εἴλετο

This shrine of brave men hath taken for its keeper the fair fame of Greece.

It is less easy to analyse the impulse which has led people to fall in love with Serbia. I had much to do with the Serbians, for later on I was in charge of their contre-espionage in Athens and was brought into close contact with the plots of the Black Hand; but perhaps because my love was concentrated upon Greece I could never become their advocate like Dr. Seton Watson or Mr. Wickham Steed. Indeed, my sympathy was with the Italian point of view when there was all that bother about Fiume. Yet I had good friends among the Italian Liberals who were as

deeply and as unreasonably enamoured of Serbia as was a certain type of English Liberal of Bulgaria. Count Carlo Sforza provides an example of this devotion in his book *Makers of Modern Europe*. It is interesting to note in him exactly the same distrust of the Greeks as you find in an Englishman like Henry Nevinson. Yet he has chosen Corfu for his self-imposed exile not Belgrade.

The fascination of Albania is easy enough to comprehend : it asserts itself even above the hideous language. I regret that I never had the good fortune to find myself in Albania while I cared less for physical discomfort than I care now. But the Balkan country which really inspires the love of the Englishman is Bulgaria. There is something about Bulgaria which speaks to the very soul of the prosperous and intellectual English Nonconformist. A monotonous line of B's, the Buxtons, Bouchier, Brailsford, have worshipped Bulgaria ; and it comes back to me now that Boyle, dinner with whom provoked this discussion of Balkan passions, was himself a lover of Bulgaria rather than of Serbia. There is something respectable about falling in love with Bulgaria. It is impossible to imagine such a respectable passion for Roumania. Indeed, I cannot recall any Englishman who has dared confess to a passion for Roumania.

Since the war what the internationalists call the Balkanization of Europe has provided a number of new small states for the susceptible. Lord Rothermere has fallen madly in love with Hungary, and every year parties of British journalists carry on a violent flirtation with Poland. Czecho-Slovakia, Lithuania, Latvia and Esthonia will soon be old enough to find lovers. And then there is the League of Nations itself, with as many breasts as the Ephesian Diana. . . .

But Boyle and I did not talk only of Balkan politics. We discussed among other things the island of Capri.

" I remember going there once as an undergraduate with

a Balliol friend of mine," he told me. "And this friend was very anxious to find out the most amusing place of entertainment. So we went to the British Consul, whose name I forget. . . ."

I reminded him of the name.

"Yes, yes, that's right. And when we got to his house, this friend of mine annoyed him intensely by asking which was the best place to find an amusing girl with whom to spend the evening. The Consul waxed indignant and asked if we thought it was part of a British Consul's duty to direct young men to haunts of vice. Whereupon my friend who liked baiting officials assured him he had always supposed that reliable advice on such matters was the chief *raison d'être* for British Consuls."

"Yes, Ted Haynes* would have said that," I put in.

Boyle looked at me in astonishment.

"How on earth did you know it was Ted Haynes?"

"Well, Haynes told me the same story once upon a time, with one slight difference. In Haynes's version it was *his* friend who was so anxious to find the amusing girl. In his version Haynes was quite indifferent how he spent the evening. But whichever version he followed it shows how much the Balliol undergraduate of the late 'nineties has been libelled."

One can say that sort of thing to a Balliol man. He is too firmly convinced of the superiority of his own college over any other to take such remarks seriously.

Boyle passed on later to do more work among the Serbian refugees elsewhere, and since I find myself in the Panhellenion I may as well stay there for the rest of this chapter. It was a very large café with a cabaret upstairs which was a good deal less entertaining than the throng below. As winter drew on, the chairs and tables outside were brought in, and from about eleven o'clock until two

* E. S. P. Haynes.

the place was crammed. Thence onward until about four it remained half full and after that until eight in the morning it grew gradually emptier. From eight till nine waiters made a pagoda of the chairs in the middle of the room and swept violently. At nine o'clock people were coming in again for coffee.

Even in a place like the Corner House I can sit for a couple of hours and watch the people round me with the kind of attention one gives to the movement of sea water. At the Panhellenion I could sit in the same way and rest one side of my brain while the other was responding to the intensity of this centre of Athenian life. Exaggerated though such a statement may sound, it was possible for me to measure the effect of any piece of news by shutting my eyes and absorbing the atmosphere of the Panhellenion. It became for me a barometer of public opinion more accurate than the vaticinations of the many weather-prophets whose reports I had to read day by day. Moreover, I was never wrong in my estimate of the reactions in Athens to the various moves of the warring powers. Here were officers, business men, professional men, journalists, idlers, and wastrels. What a fortune the proprietor would have made if his clients had drunk as much as they would have done in a northern country! But the Athenian is economical. He can exist for hours on a cup of coffee and a couple of newspapers.

One could dine and sup at the Panhellenion as well as sit and gossip there over coffee or a light innocuous bock; but I seldom dined there or at the Pantheon next door where though the food was better, the company after dinner was less varied and generally representative than at the Panhellenion. I found it a bore to eat surrounded by eavesdroppers, which was the inevitable result of dining at either of these cafés, because the tables for meals were in the middle of the room and one could not get a secretive wall

in a corner to protect the rear. Few readers will have had the experience of being followed and watched day and night for months at a stretch ; but I can testify to the irksomeness of it. In pursuit of my policy of securing a measure of secrecy through publicity I had to be careful never to disappear from the public gaze for too long at a stretch. Thus I was apparently always to be seen during the evening at the Panhellenion. I would spend a quarter of an hour there, entering by the front door. Then I would go out by a side door, drive near my destination in the Sunbeam, send the Sunbeam back immediately to wait outside the Panhellenion, and return myself by carriage. Of course at the date of which I am writing there was little need for secrecy. My agents were known. My abode was known. Later on, however, it became vital to keep several lines of communication open, and it was then that we reaped the benefit of the legend I had created about myself. In this I received much help from the publication every morning by the leading Government organs—the *Nea Hemera* and the *Embros*—of what were reputed to be my movements of the day before.

Talbot was by now in charge of the newspaper propaganda, and I never think of the Panhellenion without a picture coming to my mind of that great domed forehead of Talbot, who would so often be seated at a table in the small hours, before him a bottle of some mineral water which he never seemed to drink. Here he would usually be joined by the Editor of the *Patris*, the leading Venizelist paper, or some other journalist whose pen was in sympathy with the swords of the Entente.

Talbot had been a representative of one of the big armament firms before the war, and his appointment to take charge of British propaganda in Athens had been inspired by the Admiralty. His was the kind of personality that completely defies translation to the printed page. I have

alluded to the dome of his forehead. It was really enormous. Khubla Khan did not decree a statelier pleasure-dome in Xanadu. This forehead was rendered more impressive by the majestic stolidity of the demeanour it crowned. Twice only did I see Talbot shaken out of his usual impassivity. The first time was when Fort Roupel was surrendered to the Germans and Bulgarians and the indignation of the Venizelists for a moment led him to think that Greece would march. The next time was on that November day before the delivery of the Note demanding the surrender of the guns when he like myself realized that the result would probably be a massacre of our friends. During the whole of the time we were working in Athens Talbot and I never had a single disagreement, and I do not recall even a difference of opinion. He would, I think, be the first to acknowledge that I drew a good deal of the fire and enabled him to carry on his own work without hostile comment from the Government papers. Yet there might have been considerable jealousy between us, for I as a professional writer might have thought his appointment as Press agent in chief of Great Britain was a reflection on my abilities and he might just as easily have thought that my amateur navalism was a slight to his experience. However, we existed side by side in concòrd. So it can be done. He had a great sense of humour which he expressed by a preternatural gravity of speech and manner, and he had the American gift for pulling other people's legs. I see him in memory on many occasions, for he was a monumental figure with an ability to suggest that whatever he was doing at the moment, was it never so trivial an action, possessed immense significance. That bottle of mineral water on his table at the Panhellenion conveyed an overwhelming sense of permanence, and bottles of mineral water might be counted ordinarily among the more fugacious objects of café life. His clothes, his hat, his boots all took

on for their wearer this same immutable quality. They were the clothes, the hat, the boots of a statue in marble or stone. I remember on one occasion that the Foreign Office sent him a number of photographs of mutilated Belgians with a suggestion that they would be suitable for publication in the local Press in order to show the Greeks of what the Germans were capable.

"Well, if we print these," Talbot observed, blinking, "we shall keep them out of the war for good."

That was a strange naïvety which supposed that indignation was a stronger emotion in humanity than fear. They were ghastly photographs, and Talbot was wise to lock them up till the war was over. In 1917 he was made a Commander in the R.N.V.R. and succeeded Sells as Naval Attaché. He was an intimate friend of Venizelos, and in 1922 he was sent post haste from England to use his personal influence in Athens to prevent the execution of the condemned Ministers, and above all avert any danger to Prince Andrew. He arrived too late to save the Ministers, whereupon the British Government, which was not without a guilty conscience, broke off diplomatic relations with Greece. But Talbot saved Prince Andrew, and for this service to the British Crown he was made a K.C.V.O.

The British Press correspondent with whom I came into contact most was J. M. N. Jeffries of the *Daily Mail* who, besides serving his paper better than any other English paper was served, contrived to be of great use to our Bureau on many occasions. He did not accord with any preconceived notion of a war correspondent, for he talked like some shy and intellectual undergraduate who has been brought up with a quantity of sisters, and he looked like some delicate gentle creature out of the pages of Lewis Carroll, as diffident and timorous as the fawn that accompanied Alice across one of the squares on the other side of the looking-glass. Yet, his willowy, his almost lily-like languor of air

and ridiculous nervous giggle and absurd mannerism of ending every remark with a chanted 'what?' concealed a bravery that was almost reckless and an energy that was almost incredible in a man of such delicate health and physique.

The most exasperating correspondent was Paxton Hibben of the Associated Press of America. When I met him first in the Panhellenion, I liked the little man with his soft pointed beard and small pale face and feverish manner. He reminded me of the 'literary gents' who used to haunt the Café Royal in the days of my youth, and when he started a discussion on the beauties of Catulle Mendès I was sixteen again and back in the History Eighth at St. Paul's with a copy of *Mephistophéla* open upon my desk.

"And what is that yellow-backed monstrosity in which you are studying the Constitution of this country, Mackenzie?" my form master* inquired.

"I'm reading *Mephistophéla* by Catulle Mendès. Have you read it, sir?"

"No, I'm not old enough yet," he retorted dryly. And I think he scored.

Paxton Hibben was such a devotee of French literature and he so evidently owed to Paris everything that gave him the least claim to what he supposed was distinction that it came as a shock to hear he was the bitterest critic out here the French had, so bitter indeed that he was down on their list of dangerous suspects as a hireling of German propaganda. In justice to Hibben I never received anything like positive proof of this, and I was convinced that his habit of frequenting the German Legation was merely a search for news. It was vanity not avarice which distorted Hibben's point of view.

The quarrel with the French had been started by Hibben's obtaining some information under the seal of

* R. F. Cholmeley, C.B.E.

HOUSES AND PEOPLE

confidence and then publishing it. The French Legation refused him admittance from that time onward, whereupon he turned upon them like an angry little rat and became *persona grata* at the Palace.

When I first met him, he was full of the stupidity of our people at the British Legation in never giving him a chance to represent their point of view in America. It must have been his admiration of the prose of Catulle Mendès that won my heart, for I promised that I would give him all the information I could. He was frank about his own quarrel with the French; but he assured me that his action had been misrepresented, and I believed him. However, he soon played the same trick on myself, and when I told him what I thought of his rotten behaviour he sent me his seconds. This was unfair, because he knew I would have to decline his challenge, not being my own master in Athens. Hibben was fond of fighting duels, and I seem to remember that he was shot in the foot by one of the people he called out.

After this challenge I paid no more attention to him, though he became a great bore, for being seldom even moderately sober he was for ever trying to pick quarrels with me in public. The last row I had with him was in the autumn of 1916 when some telegrams of his from Athens mentioning my name and giving a lurid and inaccurate account of recent events were stopped by the censorship at Malta and sent back to me. I asked Hibben to come round and see me to explain why his telegrams had been held up. After raving about the god-damned British and the hell he was going to give us in his written dispatches which we could not stop, he picked up an ink-pot and rushed at me in a drunken fury. So I had to have him put in the street.

It has been necessary to make clear what Paxton Hibben's standing was, because he wrote an apology for King Constantine which was published in America and he

has been quoted by other apologists as an authority. But Hibben, clever though he was, was utterly lacking in balance. His slanders of Venizelos and the devoted patriots who followed him exceed decency, and it is another sad example of Royal credulity that King Constantine should have allowed his case to be presented by such an advocate. Yet, in spite of everything I remained sorry for the little man. He became a figure for pity, being ostracized by everybody except the Palace set who made use of him in a business capacity. Naturally it was believed he had been bought ; but I repeat that there was no proof of this, and I still think that hurt vanity was the cause of his being, as I also think, false to his own conscience ; it was because I was sorry for him and because there clung to him a queer faded fragrance of culture that in spite of being warned against him I afforded him an opportunity to behave like a man of honour as well as a brilliant journalist.

CHAPTER XIII

THE HURRIED DEPARTURE

THE first days of November were full of anxiety. Cuninghame had returned to Athens from Salonica on October 29th indignant about the tactless way we were treating the Greek authorities and anxious to go to England and put the whole position before the War Office. Napier was equally anxious to go home and explain the position. He had had a very frank interview with Venizelos who had told him that the Entente powers must make up their minds, when the Greek concentration round Salonica was complete and when the Allied troops were all arrived, to ask a definite question of Greece. The question must be 'Do you intend to fight with us or against us? We do not accept neutrality as an answer.' Now, this was the kind of straight thinking and straight speaking which infuriated the opponents of Venizelos. Nor did it appeal to the statesmen and military leaders of the Entente, for it demanded not merely that they should make up their own minds what they wanted to do, but also that they should follow up decision by action. Alas, the statesmen and military leaders of Europe were like schoolboys trying to stop the runaway balloon of the war they had loosed by pulling the ropes in different directions, and they were now being carried along helter-skelter over rough country, most of them to drop off one by one with bruises of varying severity to their reputations. It need not be added that those who travelled farthest were those who concentrated upon holding on to the ropes and did not use up their strength in vainly trying to guide

the course of the balloon. It is doubtful if the cross currents on which the Salonica Expedition was to drift for nearly three years will ever be fully and accurately charted ; but gradually from the narratives of those who tried to swim among them we are beginning to be able to grasp a little of the strange life beneath the waves. It will be remembered that the Expedition to force the Dardanelles was never viewed with favour either at G.Q.G. Chantilly or at G.H.Q. St. Omer. That the French had ever consented to play any part in it had been due to their dread of a British landing at Alexandretta, which they felt would threaten their prestige in Syria. The diversion at Salonica which was an exclusively French idea was supported by the British even more grudgingly than the French had supported the Dardanelles, because it had for enemies not merely G.H.Q. St. Omer and the believers in the Western Front as the only effective front on which to throw away ammunition, stores, and lives, but also the disappointed and thwarted believers in the Dardanelles Expedition, who from the moment it was decided to help the Serbs by way of Macedonia knew that the doom of Gallipoli was certain. Nor was the Salonica Expedition viewed with any greater favour by G.Q.G. Chantilly.

When General Sarraïl was relieved of his command of the Third Army on July 22nd, 1915, and summoned to the Ministry of War the following day, he was by no means pleased to hear from M. Millerand that he was to succeed General Gouraud in the command of an Army Corps at Gallipoli. In his own words *l'entrevue fut pénible*, and he demanded to be put on the retired list. Then M. Briand, intervening to smooth matters for the angry General, won him over to agree to take the command offered to him if and when it was made suitable to his rank. A few days later he was asked to state his wishes. He stated them clearly :

THE HURRIED DEPARTURE

1. An army was to be constituted and known as *l'Armée d'Orient*.
2. He was not to be under the orders of a British General like his predecessors.
3. He was not to leave without the necessary Divisions to make up that Army.

He followed this up with some suggestions for the employment of the Army of the Orient. The French troops were to evacuate the Peninsula and either advance along the Asiatic side of the Straits or land in the Bay of Adramiti to attack Broussa. Even better he thought would be an attack by way of Smyrna, better still one by way of Alexandretta ; but best of all would be an attack by way of Salonica. Sarraill was the first to mention Salonica in connexion with hostilities on the Eastern Front.* What kind of man was it who, after being relieved of his command in the West, could venture to make conditions before taking up another command ?

It would be necessary to go back to the Dreyfus affair and even back beyond that to explain properly the quarrel between Sarraill and the French General Staff. The chief point is that Sarraill throughout his military career had flouted the Catholic and Royalist prejudices of the heads of the French Army. He was a freethinker, a republican, and a bourgeois. He was believed to be a freemason, and he had married a Protestant. His personality had been too masterful, his military skill too evident for his career to be checked. Moreover, his political opinions coincided far more closely with the political opinions of the country at large than did those of the French General Staff. He had not hesitated to disobey Joffre's orders and hold on to Verdun

* It appears from M. Poincaré's Memoirs that Marshal Franchet D'Esperey was the first Frenchman to cast an eye in the direction of Salonica. It is significant that he was one of the friends of Sarraill, and there is a poetic completeness in the ultimate triumph of the far-sighted Franchet D'Esperey at Salonica.

in those fateful days at the beginning of September, 1914. To him, an unmentionable in orthodox military circles, ultimate history might even attribute a chief share in the victory of the Marne. His tongue was ruthless. He became a bogey, sitting there at Ste-Menehould, the headquarters of the Third Army, ready, it might be, in the event of disaster to make a bid for supreme power and equally ready to do so in the event of the success of the offensive planned in Champagne and Artois for September 26th, 1915. He must be got out of France at all costs.

But while the French General Staff were willing to give Sarraill all he wanted to get rid of him the British, less aware of his potential danger as a Napoleon, were not at all willing to sacrifice anything and everything to Sarraill's elimination from France. At a conference at Calais on September 11th General Joffre was prepared to consider the dispatch of four French Divisions to the Dardanelles, but Field-Marshal French refused to surrender two British Divisions until the coming offensive was over. Lord Kitchener refused to put either the British troops at the Dardanelles or the French Admiral under the orders of a French General, though he agreed to submit to his Government a proposal for the French and the British to command independently of one another.

What could not be solved by argument was solved by events. The Balkan crisis was precipitated, and in the end Sarraill set out for Salonica with one mixed Brigade and the assurance that he would find at Salonica the two French Divisions now at Gallipoli under General Bailloud,* and a British Division under Sir Bryan Mahon. Many advised him not to go, among others Clemenceau, who was editing *L'Homme Enchaîné* to the intense discomfort of everybody in office.

It may be presumed that a man like Sarraill did not leave

* See *Gallipoli Memories*, p. 77, etc.

THE HURRIED DEPARTURE

without having received assurances of political support. Still, with hardly any of the troops promised him, without a quartermaster, and without any instructions, he might have been wiser, purely from the point of view of personal ambition, to hold out as firmly in October as he had in September.

It had finally been agreed to give Sarraill the supreme command in the East; but when this was done a stipulation was made that the British forces at Salonica should never be called upon to make any offensive operation. Since G.Q.G. Chantilly were just as much determined as the British that Sarraill's command should be a sterile and inglorious command, they loyally supported their British colleagues in this. Not a chance did Sarraill have from the moment G.Q.G. and Millerand got him out of France. It is true that from Sir Bryan Mahon he received the most loyal support, partly because the General was Irish, and partly because Sir Bryan himself had such a deep hatred of G.H.Q. Imbros that he did all he could to bring about the complete separation of his command from any dependence on the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force. The hatred Sir Bryan Mahon had for G.H.Q. Imbros never died. I met him at dinner during the Tailtean Games at Dublin in 1924 and he became choleric in reminiscence, his cheeks flushing to the crimson of the August sunset that flowed over Merrion Square. However, on account of his alleged susceptibility to French ideas, Sir Bryan Mahon was to be succeeded by Sir George Milne, and thenceforth even the pretence of loyal British co-operation with Sarraill vanished.

Back in France Clemenceau was raving in his paper about the gardeners of Salonica, and G.Q.G. Chantilly were seeing to it that the Army of the Orient should remain gardeners. At the same time there was a strong party in France which perceived in the Army of the Orient a means to secure for their country the domination of the Levant. So that

Sarrail, though denied military initiation, was able to indulge in political intrigue. With all that leisure forced upon a man of his character it was inevitable. The obstructive attitude and actions of the Greeks when he first arrived in Salonica had embittered him against Royalism and at the same time made him too little appreciative of the Hellenic patriotism which was called Venizelism. His own fight with Royalism at home exaggerated that aggressive anti-monarchical bias. It became a question of Sarrail against the King of Greece and almost as personal a struggle as that between Venizelos and the King. This alarmed the dynastic prejudices of Great Britain which did everything to guard the throne of Greece against shocks. Fortunately for itself the British policy of the *status in quo* regally found a supporter in M. Briand who was so much under the influence of the beautiful and able Princess George of Greece. The throne was for the time safe, and of course the Russian influence was also exerted in its favour. So too was the Italian, for there was dread at the Consulta of a powerful Greece which rising under Venizelos and supported by France might stand in the way of Italian ambitions in the Levant and in the Epirus. The Russians too, though by now Constantinople was farther away from them than ever, feared that it might be coming nearer to the Greeks.

There was a unique opportunity for a great British statesman to take advantage of this confusion of personal, political, and national ambitions, to recognize in Greece the means of securing for Great Britain the domination of the Near East. A great British statesman did not exist. Ichabod! Ichabod!

As I write these words, M. Venizelos has just returned from a reconciliation with Mustapha Kemal at Angora. His Odyssey of marvels is not even yet complete. One asks whether if Mr. Lloyd George had been at the Foreign Office

THE HURRIED DEPARTURE

in 1915 . . . but no, what he achieved in 1918 as Prime Minister was achieved less by imagination than by a vitality which outlived the exhaustion of his opponents' obstinacy. Still, with Venizelos as his mentor Mr. Lloyd George might have achieved something more substantial than he did from those brilliant improvisations. He would have learnt the difference between Cilicia and Silesia. He would not have promised the Italians Smyrna in the same spirit as a woman anxious to finish her packing promises a whining child a sweet if it will be good and hold up the lid of the trunk.

As a sympathizer with M. Venizelos's strong policy Napier might have put the position at home more clearly than Cuninghame; but in the end it was Napier who stayed and Cuninghame who went home to preach the gospel of King Constantine's devotion to Great Britain and explain his irritation with France.

About the same time von Falkenhausen, the German Military Attaché, arrived back in Athens and was received by the King on the very day of his arrival, an unusual mark of Royal favour. On November 3rd General Giannakitsas, the Minister for War, who had been criticized by one of the Venizelist deputies for speaking in favour of an increase in the pay of mobilized officers walked out of the Chamber with the contemptuous remark that it was no place for him. Venizelos demanded an apology, which Zaïmis refused to call upon his Minister for War to give, and the Prime Minister then asked for a vote of confidence in the Government. Venizelos made a great attack on the policy of the Cabinet which he declared was utterly opposed to the will of the Chamber. On a vote of confidence the Government was defeated by 31 votes. M. Zaïmis insisted on resigning and a new Government was formed under M. Skouloudis, an octogenarian millionaire, of whose exasperating personality I can perhaps suggest a hint when I say that even Sir Francis Elliot confessed once that in any interview with Skouloudis

he was seized with an almost irresistible longing to take hold of his long beard and tweak it as hard as he could. The new Prime Minister was an old gentleman of admirable and extraordinary vitality; but nobody acquainted with his previous career could any longer believe that the King proposed to depart from his neutrality, at any rate in favour of the Entente. The invitation to supreme office of an ancient merchant with nothing behind him except a well rewarded commercial sagacity was not merely an insult to the great political party behind Venizelos; it was a gesture of contempt for the whole country. To behold the lanky form of that consequential, vain, and tactless old gentleman trotting deedly about Athens while Greece bled at the heart was to behold a ridiculous quack in charge of a patient for whom a great surgeon had considered an immediate operation vital.

The day that M. Skouloudis became Prime Minister there was a noticeable change in the attitude of many Athenians. It was as if they had been waiting to see how the Entente Powers would accept the promotion of this pantaloon to the Presidency of the Council. When the mocking gesture was accepted so meekly the only explanation the man in the street could fancy was fear. The failure to support Venizelos at this moment argued that the Entente Powers had no hope of being able to resist the advance of their enemies from the North. The Entente Powers were afraid that they were going to be flung into the sea.

In this changed atmosphere it was not reassuring to hear from one of the officers of the Naval Mission that six mines had been taken away from the Arsenal in a Greek mine-layer to an unknown destination. It was not reassuring to hear of a ship putting into the Bay of Salamis during the night and making strange signals. Nor was it reassuring to hear immediately afterwards that two German officers had been taken on board a Greek torpedo-boat to

THE HURRIED DEPARTURE

examine our defences at the entrance of the harbour of Salonica. There was always an alternative explanation for that kind of story ; but the incident of the mines sounded particularly ugly, and the authority was unimpeachable. I was warned by an equally unimpeachable authority that orders had been given to the Palace police to provoke incidents. I called together my men and ordered them, whatever the provocation, to remain calm and not retaliate under pain of being dismissed. The very next night at the Panhellenion one of the *mouchards* of the Palace police tried to involve me in a brawl. Infuriated because I would pay no attention he threw a chair at me, which landed on the table and smashed the coffee-cups. As I did not move and kept the two men with me from doing anything the manager of the café had the fellow thrown out and the whole incident was a fiasco.

But this was only the first of many attempts at provocation by the Palace police.

On November 4th I succumbed to bad sciatica. That week a telegram came from Cairo to say a certain John Antoniadès was believed to have reached Athens bringing with him a stolen copy of the plans of the El Kantara fortifications, and adding that he was believed to have as his accomplice a certain Menelaus in the Greek Army. It would be like looking for a needle in a haystack, but I put all hands to work on the chase without the least result. The search was not helped by knowing only the Christian name of the alleged accomplice. In the course of our men's inquiries for Antoniadès they found themselves being obstructed repeatedly, and two of them were actually arrested. The Chief of Police was a good friend of ours, and they were released as soon as he heard of their detention ; but he told Tucker that it was becoming more difficult for him all the time and that all real power was likely to be taken out of his hands very soon.

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

The bogy of the German officers in Athens which we had disposed of turned into another bogy of mines and submarines and German officers in Greek ships. No sooner had I received the reports mentioned above than reports from all over the place came in, every one of them tending to indicate the intention of the enemy to concentrate numbers of submarines all along the Greek coasts from Thasos down to Cerigo.

Any chance I had of solving that puzzle, of finding Antoniades, or of dealing with the new attitude of the Greek police was abruptly removed on the night of November when V and Leslie Garton, both in evening dress, arrived about eleven o'clock in my bedroom at the British School to say that the Chamber would be dissolved in the morning and that I must leave Greece immediately. Garton was an old Magdalen man, three or four years junior to myself, who had recently joined V for military work. The chief thing I remember about him was a development of the muscles of his palm which enabled him, after sprinkling the tobacco on his hand, to fill his pipe upside down merely by working those muscles. It was fascinating to watch the tobacco wriggling its way up into the bowl, like a snake.

I used to sleep under two mosquito-nets at the School, one not being enough to keep out the tough-winged sand-flies, which could crawl through and bite one between the toes, setting up a vile irritation. Beheld through the gauze V and Garton looked like a couple of stage ghosts, and indeed the voice of V had a hollow graveyard solemnity about it when he spoke, for he was himself in a state of profound agitation over the way things were going in Athens.

"You will leave for Naples to-morrow morning at eleven o'clock," he announced tremendously.

"But I've been in bed for a week, and I can hardly walk."

THE HURRIED DEPARTURE

"I'm awfully disgusted, my dear Z, to send you away like this, but it is too great a responsibility to have you here until the situation becomes a little clearer. We may all have to leave Athens at any moment."

"But can't I have a few days to clear things up? We have so much on hand. There are those people arrested at Mudros waiting for evidence from here, and the fellow at Imbros and . . ."

"I'm awfully sorry," V interrupted, "but I'm afraid you really must sail in the *Spetzai* to-morrow morning. We have arranged for your passage. I shall telegraph to you in Capri when it is safe for you to come back, that is if it ever is safe."

"But what about Tucker and . . ."

"I am sending Tucker and Cauchi and old Weir to Mytilene. They will be perfectly all right there. And I wish all your papers brought down to Academy Street to-morrow so that they can be burnt."

"But, look here, not the cards! Hasluck will go mad if you burn all our cards. And so shall I. Surely they can be lodged at the Legation for safety?"

"Well, if the Minister doesn't object, perhaps we might manage to keep the cards. But everything else must be burnt. We have been getting rid of all our stuff to-night."

"Yes, but A stuff has no historical value," I objected. "It's B stuff that depends on the records. I'm only just beginning to see some kind of order coming out of chaos."

I was really almost in tears, for I was thinking of what correspondence this destruction was going to provoke. There were those fellows under arrest now at Mudros and Imbros. There were three others at Malta. There was the endless case of the Armenian gun-runner. There was . . . it was really too depressing to contemplate this ruthless sweeping away of everything.

In the end V gave his definite consent to lodge the card-

index at the Legation; but practically everything else was burnt, including among other things that telegram from Cairo about Antoniades and Menelaus and the Suez Canal defences, which was to create an unsatisfactory imbroglio five months hence.

I made a final appeal before my ghostly visitors faded from that dim room into the darkness of the School corridors.

"Don't you think it will strike the Government as weakness, our all running away like this? We ought to demand an apology for interfering with our men. I've done my best to follow your instructions and avoid the semblance of an incident; but we must not be too weak, or those confounded Palace police will become impossible. We shall have endless trouble when we start work again. The work my people are doing is not like A work. We cannot pretend to be secret. It's far better to notify the Greek Government we are here and tell them why we are here. Then if they protest, we can either be withdrawn or kept here with some authority behind us. These endless half-measures in every direction will end by wrecking the whole of our position in the Balkans."

"Now, don't argue about it any more, there's a good fellow," said V. "I really must put you under orders to leave by the *Spetzai* to-morrow morning. In any case, you have been overdoing yourself far too much since you came out of hospital, and a compulsory rest will do you no end of good. And I want Hasluck to go with you. A rest will do him good. Do you think you could give him hospitality?"

The prospect of a travelling companion was welcome, and I began to recover from the dismay into which V's orders had thrown me. Then he and Garton vanished as the ghost of the Corsican Brother, also in evening dress, used to vanish in the old play at the Lyceum.

A few minutes later Hasluck who must have been inter-

THE HURRIED DEPARTURE

rupted in his own studies came in, pale and fuming, his lank hair ruffled.

"What on earth is all this bloody nonsense about going to Naples to-morrow morning?" he snapped. "You're not fit to travel, are you?"

"I've got to be. V was adamant. I tried to argue with him. But it was no good."

"Such piffing balderdash I never heard," Hasluck railed. "Does he think the Germans and Bulgarians are going to arrive in Athens?"

"No, it's the dissolution of the Chamber to-morrow."

"Dissolution, fiddlesticks!" cried the exasperated scholar. "I never heard of such old woman's behaviour."

After a few more tirades against the flight Hasluck retired to his room to pack up his things and arrange his papers. I could hear him clucking indignantly to himself along the corridor like a broody hen that has been hustled from her nest to take exercise for which she is not in the mood.

Presently Tucker arrived, and with him Clarence, who talked about his own departure to Mytilene as if he were Louis XVI on the eve of trying to fly from Paris.

"I knew we should have to run for it, Skipper, I've smelt it in the air all this past week. Skipper, there's only one thing I've got to ask before you go. If they get me on the way to Mytilene, I want you to tell my poor old mother up at Salonique that I died doing my dooty. I'm not complaining about it. You know that, Skipper. You know I come out here ready to carry my life in my hands. And I'll die game. You needn't be afraid Clarence will disgrace you, Skipper."

"Don't talk rot," I scoffed. "All you're going to do is to get a jolly good holiday which you don't deserve."

"Those are hard words, Skipper, coming from you. If we never meet again, you'll be sorry you spoke like that."

Clarence stood, shaking his head reproachfully over the injustice of which I was capable, until I sent him off on a dozen errands to give me an opportunity to discuss with Tucker the salvage of as much as we could of our records. It was a long and fussy night, and it was somewhere about five in the morning, before I could try to sleep for an hour or two.

The *Spetzai* was a typical steamer of the Eastern Mediterranean, with a sizable saloon amidships where the passengers messed and out of which the cabins opened. It was dark and stuffy, with an ikon of St. Nicolas at the darker and stuffier end, in front of which burned a small lamp, the wick floating in oil. Among the passengers was a pleasant young Secretary of the Russian Legation, whom I had met at one of 'Bijou' Elliot's tea-parties. She was the youngest of Sir Francis's daughters and the only one not yet married. In her room tucked away at the top of the Legation the social observer could have discovered the trend of the post-war generation's decorative taste. Bright contrasting colours in bold designs had banished the Morris patterns of my period. The influence of advertisement hoardings and modern architecture on the senses of the young stimulated by speed was beginning to be apparent. This relentless advance of youth in spite of the war was significant, and I remember it was at this tea-party of young people that I, who was only thirty-two myself, felt for the first time in my life a little old-fashioned.

Another passenger was Stratos, the Minister for War in a former Venizelist Cabinet, who had been forced to resign for corrupt practices and who in consequence had become one of the bitterest of Venizelos's enemies.

The tragedy of Stratos was that in his heart he believed in the policy of his old leader, but that out of personal hatred he had sold his soul to thwart it by every unscrupulous device he could contrive. He was a dark-

THE HURRIED DEPARTURE

bearded, bulky man, with a sour expression in his eyes as he leaned over the table in that dim stuffy saloon to gobble up the greasy food provided. On the second night out of a calm passage when the *Spetzai* must have been in mid Ionian I walked aft and saw the ex-Minister leaning over the rail and gazing down in solitary meditation at the spummy wake of the vessel. He and I were the only two creatures on deck, and it occurred to me that, if I were a figment of my own imagination, I should have the courage to seize the legs of the big man and tip him overboard. He was an enemy of the Allies, an enemy of Greece, an enemy even of himself. A moment of resolution, and he would be struggling vainly in that long line of grey foam which stretched it seemed indefinitely across the dim sea. There can be few voyagers who at some time or another have not played with the idea of flinging themselves overboard from a ship steaming on through the night. The idea of such utter abandonment fascinates the mind. The picture of the way the vessel will ineluctably continue upon her course, leaving one in the middle of that grey wake to utter a few cries for help ere drowning completely alone, becomes enthralling as one allows the imagination to dwell upon it. It was in such a mood that I contemplated for a minute or two upon this November night the idea of pushing that discredited politician overboard. And then I was seized by a fancy that Stratos might be contemplating the precipitation of himself into that dim nocturnal sea astern, for he was leaning further and further over the rail in a way that was really dangerous for a man of his bulk. The impulse to save was stronger than the impulse to destroy. I let my stick drop with a clatter on the deck to disenchant him if haply he really was enchanted by the thought of ending for ever the war in his own brain between faith and desire. He turned round quickly to peer suspiciously in my direction, and just then his wife came along from the starboard side of the

deck and asked him if he were not afraid of catching cold.

In a November still seven years away that dark-bearded bulky man was to pay for whatever ill he had wrought to himself or to his country when he was condemned to death for his share of responsibility for the disaster in Asia Minor, and shot at Goudi with five others.

I had telegraphed to my wife who was in London to join me in Capri as soon as possible, but when Hasluck and I reached Naples she was not yet arrived. We were not impressed by the efficiency of the Customs examination or indeed by anything at the Port of Naples, the authorities mistaking delay for vigilance and curiosity for zeal. However, we just managed to catch the afternoon boat for Capri, and after a more than usually wearisome journey round the Bay we reached the island about seven o'clock of a chill dank evening. Capri was in the depth of gloom, for the war had struck a mortal blow at the gay life of the island. Greetings from old friends were warm, but the cry was always '*O signore mio, che miseria! E questa brutta guerra quando si finirà? È un guaio per tutto il mondo.*' It seemed incredible that when I had gone away only six months ago Italy had not yet declared war. To complete the evening's depression the fire in our library at Casa Solitaria smoked abominably, and poor Hasluck's cough was incessant.

However, the next day my wife arrived, and with a few lunch parties we tried to pretend that it really was Capri again. But the weather remained grey and dank and chill, while the expectation of a telegram every day to recall me to Athens made it impossible to feel at home.

One day my boatman Vincenzo came up to see me. He had been with the Italian navy since the declaration of war, and this was his first leave.

"*Ab, signore,*" he sighed, "you were right when you

THE HURRIED DEPARTURE

said in June, 1914, that the murder of that Austrian would bring war to the world. How many times since have I thought about what you said that evening at Nerano, though at the time I did not believe you."

My memory went back to that fatal Twenty-Eighth of June and to the scene where I had heard the news of the Sarajevo assassination.

I had been working all through the spring and early summer at the second volume of *Sinister Street*. Il Rosaio, the tiny three-roomed cottage up at Anacapri, had become steadily hotter, and not a petal was left of its roses. My friend John Mavrogordato had stopped at Capri on his way back from Greece where in some vaguely helpful capacity he had been attached, as one might say, to the late war in the Balkans. The pleasant disturbance of this arrival made a brief holiday appear vital to any further progress with the book. Three days, but not an hour more could be spared: three full days of sun and sea-water and sublime laziness. Vincenzo had relations in Nerano, a village on the other side of the Sorrentine peninsula, and he knew of a house right on the beach of Cantone below, a tumble-down old *palazzo* where we could spend as many nights as we liked in comfort. "*Aria sana, aria fresca*," he urged, as if the air of Cantone would be fragrant with some further magic of health and refreshment that even Capri could not provide.

The ratcheting of the cicadas from the olive-covered slope above the dark crescent of that beach is in my ears now. And as our boat glided over the sleek blue water of a breathless afternoon to put us ashore, we looked for some monstrous millwheel, so busy and so pervasive was the sound. But the natural scene here is sacred to the pen of Norman Douglas. His are the sea-caves and the goat-trampled grottos of the mountains, his the screaming of the swifts, the sea, the sky, the lucid air; and in turning

the pages of *Siren Land*, so aromatic are they, so pungent with sun-dried wisdom and rosemary, the reader looks instinctively between them for the flowery keepsakes of a cherished summer day overpast.

We landed on the Siren islets and fed the lizards that scuffled across the relics of a Roman pavement. We planned to rescue Douglas from sub-editing *The English Review* and to enshrine him here with the roses and cedars of which he had written. We planned—oh, what did we not plan, supposing that the second volume of *Sinister Street* should sell in myriads and that John Mavrogordato should obtain a great price for some property of his in Byzantium? Or was the Ægean even more wonderful than the waters of this bemused Salernian Gulf? Samos? Chios? Lesbos?

I could fancy now that some goddess offered me on that day the fulfilment of any wish I cared to make, and that I wished heedlessly as Tithonus wished for immortality, forgetting to wish as well for eternal youth. Samos? Chios? Lesbos? The wish would soon be granted, but with what an unimaginable malice of condescension!

That night we had the parish priest to dinner—a kind of Friar Tuck exuding a rich breath of good wine and a deal of dog Latin. To-morrow he was to be in the boat with us for the sport of shooting rock-pigeons. But in the end he spent the day in and out of the water—a hippopotamus of a man, but learned and subtle, a Thomist hippopotamus. It seemed that the Festival of St. Anthony of Padua might have to be celebrated at any moment. But that had been on June 13th, I observed, a fortnight since! Quite so, and every morning he had been coming down to say Mass in the little chapel by the sea's edge. It was the fishermen's *fiesta*, he explained, and the celebration of it depended not upon the calendar of the Holy Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church, but upon the catch of fish. If there were

THE HURRIED DEPARTURE

no fish, there was no money to buy fireworks. It rested with the Saint to provide for his own commemoration. What a sensible way to treat a saint, we thought, especially a saint who had preached with such success to fishes and could not be excused through any ignorance of their habits. No fish, no fireworks. It was reasonable.

And that very evening the catch was made. The image of St. Anthony was rowed out to meet the triumphant boat full of anchovies, in the prow of which, silver-laden, he solemnly and benignly returned. There would be fireworks two days later. But we should not see them. This positively had to be our last night ; and we sat on the crescent beach, with a young yellow moon hanging over Monte San Constanzo to westward and in the old *palazzo* where we slept the yellow candlelight winking under the lee of the eastward horn of the land. A boy of about thirteen called Giacinto sat on the beach beside us and played ducks and drakes with glossy pebbles. His soul was filled with the glory of fireworks. He chattered in a partially comprehensible dialect about a life that for some days would be spent in a perpetual blaze of golden rain and a rousing din of maroons. Down through the dusky olive-grove came Vincenzo with the evening's provisions and the newspaper.

"What news ?" we asked.

"No news," he said. "The fireworks cannot be set off for three days, and some Austrian Duke has been killed somewhere. *Ecco il giornale !*"

It was too dark to read even the headlines ; but in the candlelight of that tumbledown *palazzo* by the sea's edge we read how the Archduke Francis Ferdinand had been assassinated at Sarajevo. Whether it was to create an impression of knowledge for simple folk or because I had a moment's illumination of the future I do not know ; but I answered that this murder would mean a European war.

Vincenzo smiled.

"*O signor scherza*," he said politely.

And now in this cold empty Capri of November 1915 he was reminding me of my prophecy and reproaching himself for being such a fool as to think at the time that I was joking.

On November 20th a telegram came from Athens through the Consul-General in Naples telling Hasluck and me to return as soon as possible; but it was the beginning of December before we were able to get a steamer. This was the *Athenai*, a sister ship of the *Spetzai* in which we had travelled out. The voyage to Messina was terribly stormy. I was twice flung out of my bunk, which was the upper one, and both of us were very sick. My leg was bad when we left Naples, and the hammering it received during those twenty-four hours down the Tyrrhenian made it worse, so that by the time we reached Messina I was walking on white-hot spikes and had not the heart to explore the place at all. Not that it offered any encouragement to sight-seeing, for it was still a nightmare city of huts and façades, of rubbish heaps, and jumbled masonry, the aftermath of the great earthquake.

As I was crossing the gang plank to go on board again from the empty wharves of the harbour, I heard a shout behind me and turned round to see one of the port officials waving. I waited for him, and he told me that the *Spetzai* had just arrived with the news that she had been stopped by an Austrian submarine yesterday afternoon and that two British officers had been taken off and carried away as prisoners. I had a few qualms about going on until I reflected how improbable it was that this feat would be repeated immediately. Still, the notion of a long voyage in a submarine to a long imprisonment in Austria or perhaps death at the hands of one of our own ships was not pleasant. There was not time to make inquiries on the *Spetzai*, because our own vessel was on the point of sailing. We

THE HURRIED DEPARTURE

were no sooner out of harbour than the captain came down to our cabin to say that in the event of the steamer's being stopped by a submarine he should be obliged to hand me over at once. So with Hasluck to translate for me I pointed out to the Captain that the companion-way down into the saloon was narrow and that it curved in such a way as to afford a perfect shot from my cabin at anybody who ascended by it. I pointed out that the door of the cabin afforded good cover for the marksman inside. I pointed out that the narrowness and shape of the companion-way precluded any possibility of its being rushed without heavy loss to the rushers. And finally I pointed out the two pistols I had which, I added, could be re-loaded by my friend as fast as I emptied their magazines.

"But if you resisted," the Captain said, "the submarine might sink the ship."

"He undoubtedly would," I agreed.

"But you surely would not risk the lives of the passengers and crew? As a British officer you would never do that."

"I certainly would if you were to do what you threatened."

"But how can I help it? The commander of the submarine will ask for the passenger list and when he sees your name he will demand that you go with him."

"Then the simplest thing for you to do is immediately to erase my name from the passenger list."

"But I could not do that. What will happen when we reach the *Piræus* if I do that? It is against the regulations to carry passengers without putting their names in the list."

"There are no German submarines lying off the *Piræus* yet, and I will see that you do not get into trouble with the Port authorities there."

"What you ask is quite impossible," the Captain of the *Athenai* declared.

"Very well then. You will find that it is equally impossible to take me prisoner without several of your crew or the submarine crew getting shot in the companion-way. So you must settle the problem for yourself."

The Captain retired, gesticulating and fuming at the madness of people like myself ; but presently he came down again with the passenger list and showed Hasluck's name and mine blotted out from the records.

"But what if the Commander of the submarine demands that every passenger shall show his passport ?" the Captain asked pessimistically.

"He won't do that," I said with much more confidence than I felt. "He'll be too nervous to waste so much time on the surface."

"Well, I shall do my best to save you from being taken prisoners," the Captain promised.

"And I'll do all I can too," I said cheerfully.

However, the voyage was much too rough for submarines to play any tricks. The Ionian was like the Channel at its worst. That night was an inferno. My leg was raging with pain. I can still hear the creaking of that ship and poor Hasluck's cough-cough from the bunk below. I can still see the dirty white paint of that cabin, and the emaciated figure of Hasluck in his vest as he held on to the side of the bunks and tried to get into an overcoat to go in search of something to alleviate my pain. He had got over his own sickness by now ; but I was still retching from time to time, and I claim for the combination of sea-sickness with acute sciatica a conspicuous depth in the ocean of human misery. Presently Hasluck came back with a small bottle of laudanum which the chief officer happened to have by him as a souvenir of toothache. Sugar was suggested as the medium for taking it, with a warning that sixty drops was the maximum dose. I put forward a claim for sixty drops of laudanum on a lump of sugar as the

THE HURRIED DEPARTURE

most revolting morsel a sea-sick creature could attempt. . . . Ugh! During the next half-hour I played yearningly with the idea that a German submarine was soon going to sink the *Athenai* without warning. The laudanum had the same effect on me as the nightingale on Keats, and it really was seeming rich to die, because there appeared no other way of cutting short a pain which was beginning to acquire that ghastly present of a dream which is making the past and the future equally incredible.

Then the imagination began to spin like a chromatic top so that the mind was ringed round with a succession of coloured images which melted into one another without apparent cause and effect. The chromatic circles formed and dissolved, re-formed and dissolved again in a throb of colour.

It seemed to be the voice of Cavour that was speaking on the night's Neptunian shore . . . the night's Plutonian shore . . . the night's Ionian shore. . . .

"Captain Mackenzie, I think that Tashjian will now tell you where these rifles may be found."

And I was in some dim room, seated opposite a tall and sallow Armenian whose voice oozed from him like butter.

"There were 110,000 rifles captured from the Turks when Salonica was surrendered to the Greeks. 48,000 are new, 60,000 are old. They are Mausers. These have all been smuggled away by two leading Greek officers and seven or eight others. The German Embassy in Constantinople told the Guessarian and Plattner to negotiate a deal, and a Greek from Chalcis called Yorghis Krikas came on the smugglers' behalf to Constantinople. There has been much argument about the price. In December, 1914, Guessarian had come to Athens to arrange details of the price, and the way to smuggle them into Turkey. But there was a big quarrel. Then Catzegoras, acting for the owners, loaded a sailing vessel with 10,000 rifles, which were landed in

Turkey. Another vessel was loaded with 5,000 rifles, but she was sunk, and the captain and the crew were drowned. Then 12,000 were put on a schooner, and she ran the blockade into the Gulf of Vourla. But the Turks had seen this ship coming and not knowing it is their own ship they have fired and forced the schooner to put back and shelter in a small bay of the island of Mytilene. And of what happened then there are two stories. One says that the rifles were carried overland and sold to a French torpedo-boat taking payment by cheque. The other story says that they were sold for gold to the Greeks. But who knows which is true ? ”

I was writing these details with my forefinger upon the bedclothes surrounded by an olivine ring of tall fallow Armenians whose voices oozed quietly forth like butter. Their eyes flashed for an instant to become once again veiled with cunning. Once more Tashjian was speaking :

“ Then I was sent with a Turkish passport and a letter from the German Embassy to try and ship the rifles, and I have found Agop Eskendrian, because Agop is an expert smuggler of rifles in whom I had much trust. But four months pass, and I am never seeing a rifle. They tell me 10,904 are hidden by Chalcis, 3,706 by Volo, some in a monastery of Sciathos, some in Syra, and many in Samos. Now I go every day to the German Legation here, but I think that de Grancy becomes suspicious of me.”

And once more I go over this complicated case. What is Tashjian's object in giving us this information ? He asks for no money. He sees nobody except myself and Cavour. What would he gain by inventing this story unless by getting himself into our confidence he can double-cross us ? But there is no question of his ever being employed by us. Guessarian whom we have captured denies all knowledge of the rifles. Probably the 110,000 rifles were really 110 rifles long since disposed of, and the buried treasure grew

THE HURRIED DEPARTURE

in bulk and value as it always does in myths. The rifles do not exist. The German Embassy in Constantinople, the German Legation in Athens, Tashjian, Guessarian, Agop Eskendrian, ourselves—we all pursue a jack o' lantern.

Then the sallow faces of Tashjian which ringed me round melted into the tallowy faces of the agent called Byron, who was producing German spies as fast as a conjuror produces streamers of coloured tissue paper from the air. This was not the moment to watch that loathsome long fingernail of his innumeraably duplicated, and Byron vanished in a spasm of retching.

And now the voice of Clarence was speaking and his musky scent pervaded all that unhappy cabin :

"Skipper, two English girls have arrived from Constant. via Salonique. Bertha Proctor and Trixie Ellwood. Trixie is really a Hun. This is hot information, Skipper."

The cabin fills with steam from the heat of Clarence's information, and when it clears away I am sitting at a table in the open air Café Concert at Patissia called Le Petit Trianon. The audience is large to-night, and at the top of the bill I read :

TRIXIE

La Belle Anglaise

et

L'enfant gâtée d'Athènes

The brilliant moonlight dims the gilt of the proscenium to a pathetic tawdriness and the footlights lose their lustre. Then a girl in a short fluffy skirt comes prancing on to the stage amid loud applause and a banging of iron tables. She has long slim legs and a baby face and pale golden hair, and her voice as she sings some English song of a bygone Gaiety success is breathless as a child's.

"That's her, Skipper. That's the Hun."

Clarence has emerged from the path that leads through

a shrubbery to the stage-door and is breathing into my ear.

But already I have begun to be sceptical about beautiful female spies, and I discourage Clarence's hunting. He shrugs his shoulders and casts upon me the responsibility of 'no further action to be taken.'

But the problem of Trixie's nationality appears to be irresistible. I find that half my agents are engaged in wasting their time in solving it to the neglect of far more important duties. And the limit of my patience is reached when I receive a note from Miss Bertha Proctor asking me to protect her against persecution. I interview a buxom Lancashire woman of a certain age who in spite of years of cabaret life on the Continent still speaks with the Burnley accent of her youth.

"Look I've coom to ask if it's by your orders that these bloody detectives I don't think have been messing oop all my trunks and all Trixie's trunks, looking for something they'll never damned well find. They've found nowt, lad, and that's evidence we're nowt but what we say we are. Eh, it's damned disgoosting, and that's a fact. And I tell you this, Mister, if that big-nosed Ikey Moses who calls himself Lieutenant Clarence I don't think cooms nosing and ferreting around us again I'll smash his mug for him, and that's straight. Yes, I can be as patriotic as anybody, thank God, but there's no bloody patriotism in mucking about with a couple of poor girls' trunks. Let him get out to the trenches and muck about with the Germans."

And no sooner had Miss Proctor flounced indignantly out of the cabin than a young Englishman employed on special service in Athens arrives to complain bitterly of the way this poor girl is being treated by my blackguards, and wishes to know if I have authorized the persecution.

"Look here, see the girl yourself. Ask her any questions you like. You'll find she's perfectly harmless."

THE HURRIED DEPARTURE

So I had seen Trixie, and now I was thinking that if ever I have time I will write the story of this waif of the war and call it *No Papers*. In the cabin on board the *Athenai* that night the story took shape and somehow at odd moments I managed to write it during 1916; but the manuscript was destroyed when my house was shot to pieces on the Second of December. Since then I have used her as a figure in two of my novels, and since her story still captivates my fancy I may once again make a romance of it, not all of which will be actual fact, because true stories usually contrive to be bad romances.

We reached Patras early in the morning, a cold rain drenching down upon the dark deserted quays. Nothing I could say would stop dear Hasluck from dressing himself and going out to try to find a doctor who might give me relief from pain. But the *Athenai* was only waiting for one hour, and during that time he was unsuccessful. However, in the calmer water of the Gulf of Corinth I was able to sleep a little, and by the time we reached the Piræus I was much better.

Tucker was down at the quay beaming, and by the time we disembarked he had persuaded all the officials that I was a being of such importance that when I offered to show them my passport they shrank with horror from committing a sacrilege. So there was no bother about the erasure of Hasluck's name and mine from the passenger list of the *Athenai*.

We drove directly to 3 Visarionos Street where Tucker had made all arrangements for me and himself to live for the present.

A good deal had happened while we had been away, including a visit from Lord Kitchener who had seen King Constantine and told him that he did not approve of the Salonica landing, because every shot fired at a Bulgarian instead of at a German was a waste of ammunition. The

King had been delighted with him, considering him the plain blunt soldier he admired so much more and understood so much better than the wily diplomat. King Constantine invariably spoke of diplomats as if they were all astute and guileful. It was difficult to guess on what experience he based his opinion. No doubt Lord Kitchener had been too deeply pre-occupied with the evacuation of Gallipoli and the defence of Egypt against the threatened Turko-German invasion to pay any real attention to the Greek situation. He had agreed much against his will and judgment to the landing at Salonica. But he did not want the Greeks to come in, because that might have meant taking the Salonica Army seriously. This was evading the issue to which the Entente Powers had been committed. A pusillanimous surrender to Bulgaria was not the spirit in which the Germans would deal with the Roumanian intervention next year. However, Lord Kitchener's visit to King Constantine confirmed him in his neutrality and encouraged him to turn that neutrality into an embittered neutrality in the course of which nothing was left undone by the Greek General Staff to make the Allied use of Salonica so uncomfortable as inevitably to suggest soon that behind their acts of petty vexatiousness existed the will to make it as dangerous as it was uncomfortable. Almost coinciding with the visit of Lord Kitchener there had been a visit from M. Denys Cochin who on his way back chose Messina as the spot to give an interview proclaiming his conviction that party strife alone was responsible for the suspicions cast upon King Constantine's intentions.

Yet while this was being proclaimed the Entente Powers had found it necessary to declare a 'pacific' blockade of Greece in order to convince the Government that the now retreating Anglo-French forces must occupy Salonica. M. Skouloudis had committed the first of a long series of *gaffes* by telling the French Minister, M. Guillemin, that if any

THE HURRIED DEPARTURE

retreating Serbian troops crossed the frontier they would have to be disarmed and interned and that according to the Hague Convention the Greeks ought to intern any Anglo-French troops as well. Four days after the 'pacific' blockade began the Greek Government had accepted the Allied Note and the *fait accompli* of Salonica as the base of the Allied operations. Serbia had been emptied of Serbians. Monastir had been evacuated on December 5th, and on the day of our arrival back the Allies were retreating from the Vardar, the British with 1,500 casualties losing eight mountain guns. The military situation round Salonica looked as gloomy as it could. As for Venizelos, he had announced that in protest against the unjustifiable dissolution of the Chamber his party would abstain from voting at the new Elections, which were to be held on December 19th.

The only amusing thing I heard was Lady Elliot's farewell to Lord Kitchener on the steps of the British Legation.

"Good-bye, Lord Kitchener," she had said, "I hope that you'll look in and have tea with us the next time you come this way."

No doubt Lady Elliot was merely being her kind and courteous self; but she managed to express in that remark more devastatingly than a Voltaire the complete futility of Lord Kitchener's passage through Athens.

On visiting the Legation I found that Lord Kitchener's visit, the pacific blockade, the retreat from the Vardar, the occupation of Salonica as a base, and the new Elections had all taken a back seat for the time in the news of the capture of Colonel Napier and Captain Stanley Wilson, M.P., the War Office Messenger, from the *Spetzai* by an Austrian submarine, and not merely the two officers themselves but the Legation mail-bags as well. Poor V was nearly distraught, for among his dispatches had been a list of all our agents in Constantinople, which was a pretty ghastly

prospect for them. Later on news had come that only one bag had been captured and that an American woman passenger had taken charge of the others, refusing to deliver them up to our Embassy in Rome, refusing indeed to deliver them up to anybody except Lord Kitchener himself in person. The problem now was which bag had been flung overboard by Wilson. Garnett, who was very miserable, was convinced that all the crossed bags had been properly leaded, and it looked as if the captured bag was the big uncrossed one which would contain the private correspondence of members of the Legation and others, but no confidential dispatches and not V's list of agents. However, as everybody at the Legation had been writing indiscreet letters home, the gloom was not perceptibly lifted.

When the *Spetzai* came back, I sent down Tucker to see the Captain and write a full report of what had taken place. It seemed that late on the afternoon of December 5th, a submarine flying the Austrian flag had emerged just as the *Spetzai* was passing out of the Gulf of Corinth into the Ionian Sea. He had fired a shot across the bows of the Greek steamer from about a mile away and indicated his intention to stop her. The older of the two officers had been very calm and had immediately gone down to his cabin where he had destroyed some papers, the Captain thought. The younger of the officers had been much agitated and had flung a large bag overboard from the stern of the *Spetzai*. This bag had drifted about without sinking. The Commander of the submarine had called across through a megaphone for the Captain to lower a boat and bring the passenger list. The submarine Commander had looked through it and then sent back the Captain's boat for Colonel Napier, Captain Wilson, and a Captain Finlay, who was a medical officer coming from Serbia, and who was wearing a Red Cross badge. Captain Finlay had not been kept, but Colonel Napier and Captain Wilson had been told that they

THE HURRIED DEPARTURE

must consider themselves prisoners of war and prepare to be taken away in the submarine. They had both been allowed to go back to the steamer to fetch their suit-cases. The Captain of the *Spetzai* had been immensely impressed by Colonel Napier's calm demeanour, to which he kept alluding in a rapture of admiration. While the officers were getting their clothes, the Commander of the submarine had noticed the floating bag, and had sent a boat to hook it up. There had been no search of the steamer. The Commander of the submarine had appeared to be nervous and anxious to submerge again. An American lady had kept Captain Wilson's other bags. She had stood over them like a hen over her chickens and would not leave them for a moment.

We wondered why Wilson had flung the big uncrossed bag over first, because one of the smaller and more heavily weighted confidential bags would have been the obvious one to save first from the enemy. However, that was a puzzle which was likely to remain unsolved for many months to come.

Both Napier and Wilson suffered a long imprisonment in Austria, though Wilson was exchanged some months before his companion in misfortune. Probably he was exchanged because he was a Member of Parliament, though at the time unkind gossip said he had talked so incessantly all the while that the Austrians had exchanged him at last in self-defence. But perhaps this is to make a distinction without a difference in the reason for exchanging him.

In due course excerpts from the captured letters were published in the neutral Press, and the originals were sent by the Emperor Francis Joseph to King George. I can no longer remember any of the indiscretions except one of Erskine's in a letter to his mother, Lady Mar and Kellie, to whom he had written that the only solution of the Greek situation was to kick the King of Greece off the throne. I know that Garnett felt much upset over something he had

written and that he asked to be transferred, which in due course he was, his place as First Secretary being taken by Reggie Bridgeman, who will not arrive, however, in time for this volume.

Whether the submarine, which although flying the Austrian flag had a North German commander and crew, was warned of the departure of Napier and Wilson by wireless remains unknown. Colonel Napier had visited the Minister for War the evening before he sailed, and the Minister for War knew that Napier unlike Cuninghame was in favour of taking a strong line with Greece. It may be that it was felt advisable not to let Napier have a chance of contradicting the favourable impression of Greek motives and intentions which Cuninghame would have given and which would have been confirmed by Lord Kitchener. It is possible too that the attitude of Lord Kitchener may have been supposed to be a tremendous bluff and that the Greek Government had hoped by capturing the Legation dispatches to learn what was the real intention of Great Britain. Against this, however, may be set the failure of the submarine Commander to make any attempt to search the steamer. One fact I discovered later which is suggestive, though of course it may be nothing but a coincidence. There was laid up at Eleusis a 10,000 ton Austrian liner, the *Marienbad*, the Captain of which was a Triestino. He informed us that not until the day after the capture of Napier and Wilson was the wireless dismantled, although it was supposed to have been dismantled in August, 1914. However, I thought at the time and I still think that the capture was probably a fluke. I may state here definitely that no list of agents in Constantinople was taken, for I have been repeatedly assured by know-alls that the capture of this list resulted in all our agents there being arrested and shot. The story even finds a place in Lord Bertie's Diary.

The Athens Chancery was in disgrace over the captured

THE HURRIED DEPARTURE

bag, and the amount of lead used thenceforth to weight Foreign Office bags left nothing to chance. I once carried a tiny crossed bag with a most confidential dispatch for M. Venizelos from London to Athens, and my arms might have ached less if I had carried M. Venizelos himself.

Yet in spite of lead the bag to Russia was captured early in 1917, as I remember, somewhere in the North Sea. The contents were published in the neutral Press, among others a confidential letter from Lord Hardinge, then Permanent Under-Secretary, to Sir George Buchanan, our Ambassador at Petrograd, which began something like this :

Dear George :

These revolutionaries are going to spoil the whole show . . .

Lord Hardinge no doubt was right, but the publication of his opinion was at that particular moment somewhat embarrassing to our endeavour to pretend that we welcomed the Revolution. Incidentally it seems to exonerate Sir George Buchanan from the charge that he was chiefly responsible for the Russian Revolution.

CHAPTER XIV

BACK IN ATHENS

THE confusion caused by the abrupt removal of Hasluck and myself from Athens for a whole month makes me shudder to think about even now. Nobody at V's Bureau in Academy Street had notified G.H.Q. Imbros of our departure, so that while I was away urgent demands for further evidence against nearly half-a-dozen suspects, who were being kept under arrest in the Area of the Dardanelles Operations, had been coming to Athens without any acknowledgment; and no sooner had I re-established communication with Deedes at G.H.Q. than the evacuation of Gallipoli began and we were faced with the prospect of losing half our financial support. On top of this the anxiety of Army Headquarters at Salonica to be completely independent of either control or advice by General Headquarters of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force at Imbros led the Intelligence there to hinder and oppose in every conceivable way the work of the V Bureau in Salonica, and thus equally in Athens, both of which had been to some extent dependent on the good will of G.H.Q. I was not sharp enough at the time to realize what was the matter. Had I grasped the true state of affairs, I might have managed to get up somehow to Salonica and ascertain for myself what was destroying any attempt in Athens at effective co-operation. Later on, relations between the branch of the V Bureau in Salonica and the Intelligence of Army Headquarters became so strained that no efforts from Athens to bring about a better understanding could accom-

plish anything, while they were regarded with suspicion by both sides. The military Authorities perceived in them a desire to interfere politically with their prerogative, and the Salonica branch of V's Organization was convinced that Athens was trying to swallow it up. Not even when my intimate friend Pirie-Gordon went to work with the V Bureau in Salonica was it possible to reach a satisfactory compromise. No individual can primarily be blamed for this state of affairs. It was inherent in the British system of beginning to make war seriously long after everybody else, which is sometimes called not knowing when you are beaten.

The strain of work in Athens had told severely on V himself, and now, with the prospect of the Gallipoli evacuation looming, he decided that his work could be done better elsewhere. It was of course a *sécret de polichinelle* that V intended to vacate Academy Street and re-establish himself in Cairo or Alexandria; but partly for military reasons connected with the evacuation and partly because V himself was wedded to the notion of secrecy for the sake of being secret, his ultimate whereabouts could not be mentioned. Not only that, but the day of his departure had to be another profound secret, and with the responsibility of the move lying heavily upon him he could not be induced to discuss in any detail the future of the organization in Athens. Everything was left extremely vague.

Matthews,* a hot-tempered but very able Ulsterman, was put in charge of the A side of our work. He was a Vice-Consul who had been on special service in Bulgaria, and he was, foolishly as I thought, to be given a room at the Legation in which to work. Space was limited, so actually Matthews' room was one of the cellars. With Matthews, in spite of all I could urge against it, the wretched Hasluck was buried. I pointed out to V that we were perfectly able

* W. D. W. Matthews, H.B.M.'s Consul at Trebizond.

to secure Hasluck's safety either at the British School or at 3 Visarionos Street ; but V had got it into his head that the Greek police were capable of seizing the card-index and lodging Hasluck in jail for an indefinite period, and nothing I could say would induce him to allow the unfortunate scholar to work anywhere else. In vain did I point out that all the material from which Hasluck made up his index would necessarily be kept at our headquarters in Visarionos Street. In vain did I plead the disastrous effect on his health of condemning him to work without light or air. V had made up his mind to put Hasluck in that cellar, and argument was useless.

The next blow fell when I was told that all my telegrams must be given to Matthews to encipher. I was glad enough in one way to be relieved of the wretched fatigue of enciphering them myself and, with Tucker already hopelessly overworked in every way, I was glad he would not have this additional burden. Still, I foresaw a fruitful occasion for strife between Matthews and myself over these telegrams, which would inevitably be a continual annoyance to him, and on the dispatch of which at the earliest possible moment I should have no right to insist, since he would always be entitled to plead priority of importance for his own information. And of course Matthews and I used to have about three rows a week over those telegrams so long as it was his task to encipher them. We were not temperamentally sympathetic one with the other, and the miserable conditions under which poor Matthews worked in that cellar did not benefit his temper. Indeed, he and Hasluck lived the life of mushrooms being forced for the Parisian market. I could hardly forbid Hasluck to help with the encoding, though he had more than enough to do in keeping his card-index up to date. At the same time, I had to insist that his help with the telegrams was strictly voluntary and that the cards must take precedence. Matthews himself

was without any help, and so when he was employing an agent of whose trustworthiness he wished to be assured he had to fall back on my people for advice. This was all right when I could spare their attention ; but very often they were all so fully occupied that it was difficult to take them from urgent jobs to shadow some man for Matthews. Moreover, I was particularly anxious to keep my side of the show free from espionage, because it afforded the Greek Government too easy a retort to our complaints of espionage in Athens by the enemy. It seemed to me to weaken our case when the Legation undertook to give Matthews the hospitality of one of its cellars, and I was most anxious to be dissociated from his work. Finally, the information sent by Matthews and myself was bound to clash when it came to Greek affairs, and one of the first disputes was over telegrams about Greek politics. I could not see the advantage in two of us sending possibly mutually contradictory information about the state of affairs in Athens, and I continued to agitate for the principle that my colleague should confine himself strictly to obtaining information about the recognized enemy whether Turkish or Bulgarian or German.

Looking back on these days, I marvel that Matthews and I ever got on so well as we did. He had every reason to resent the position in which V had placed him, for he might have expected that his A work would grow in importance, whereas actually he had no chance in Athens to make any kind of a show, and it was not until 1916 when he was moved to Switzerland that he had his opportunity, of which he availed himself to the full. I must have been very trying as a colleague, for I could never bring myself to respect the tradition of ' professionalism ' and Matthews could not bear the short cuts I was always ready to take, regardless of consular etiquette or military etiquette or any other kind of etiquette. Later in the war I was shown some con-

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

fidential observations on myself in Whitehall, and against my name was written in red ink :

This officer has too much initiative. Would make an ideal Number Two.

Matthews as a member of the Consular Service was debarred from initiative, which however unwelcome to one's superiors is a tonic to oneself and in time of war not without its good points. Not that anybody really had a right to complain of my initiative, for my own position in Athens was left most indeterminate. Erksine and Sells had offered to act as godfathers to the B side of V's posthumous work in Athens ; but V never explained to either of them who was ultimately responsible in London for that work, and he reserved to himself the immediate authority wherever he should find himself when the removal from Athens was accomplished. Sells had a shot to get the contraband intelligence linked up with contre-espionage ; but V would not hear of interfering in any way with the prerogatives that the Commercial Department had by now acquired. The initial of C was invoked to justify everything, but who C was and where C was and what C was and why C was we were not told. The result of such mystification was presently to involve us all with C himself and create a cat's cradle of misapprehensions which was not finally unravelled until I went to London and met C himself in October 1916, by which time it was too late to prevent others from ravelling it up again. Had I been in Athens instead of London during that October the tragic events of December the First might have been avoided ; but once again let me insist that no individual can be blamed. We were all the victims of improvisation and lack of co-ordination. I cannot think why the English have made a national hero of Alfred the Great instead of Ethelred the Unready.

And then one night while Erskine and Sells and I were

BACK IN ATHENS

trying to find out exactly what my position would be in Athens, V as softly and as silently as the Boojum vanished away from Athens. It was difficult to realize that I should never again visit that little room of V's in Academy Street, always to find him sitting there at his desk, kind and courteous and full of mystery. Knowing as I did how hard it had been to persuade V into any definite action while I was able to talk over matters with him, my heart sank at the prospect of discussing matters by letters to which I could never expect an answer in less than three weeks. I dreaded the loss of personal contact which with one so charming and sympathetic as V softened all the irritation caused by what often seemed a temperamental disinclination to say 'yes,' whereas my trouble was a temperamental disinclination to say 'no.' That was really the only disaccord. Yet, with the whole width of the Mediterranean between us, it was likely to be acute enough. V and I would remain in perfect agreement about the theory of the Greek situation; but I was wondering pessimistically how far we should agree about the practical management of what I foresaw must inevitably develop into something very much more vital than the game of contre-espionage which until now we had been playing in Athens as children play hide and seek or blind man's buff.

The confusion and worry of this latter half of December, 1915, is reflected in my memory, which fails to respond to my demand for the sequence of events. Money was the prime anxiety, for expenses were mounting daily. I seem to remember sending a desperate appeal for funds to V and receiving back for answer a telegram through the Legation instructing me that I was to send all communications to V, c/o Colonel Featherstonehaugh, c/o the Director of Something or Other, Alexandria. And I seem to remember another telegram telling Matthews and me that it was hoped to send us within a few days the name of V's new

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

Organization, and I seem to remember the arrival of an undecipherable telegram from Alexandria which tried to tell us what that name was, and then finally when the funds were at zero, a telegram to say that in future the Organization would be known as the Eastern Mediterranean Special Service Bureau.

The confusion in Athens was but a microcosm of the confusion everywhere else.

The evacuation of Gallipoli meant that the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force would move its G.H.Q. either to Alexandria or to Cairo, and the state of affairs in Egypt was immortally expressed by some profane scribe whose anonymity I never heard unveiled.

I have two versions of *The Mediterranean Creed*, the slight textual variations in which I have ventured to collate, and, as it seems a pity to let this profoundly witty commentary on the state of affairs in Egypt be dispersed in typed copies, I propose to print it here, with apologies to the writer for infringing his copyright, and a suggestion that readers who dislike profanity should skip the pages it occupies :

AFTER MORNING PARADE THE MEDITERRANEAN CREED

Whosoever will be decorated : before all things it is necessary that he hold the Mediterranean Faith.

Which Faith, except everyone do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall be stollenbosched everlasting.

And the Mediterranean Faith is this : that we worship the G.O.C. in trinity, and trinity in unity.

Both confounding the Generals, and damning their commands.

For there is one General of Egypt, another of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, and another of the Levant Base.

But the authority of Egypt, of the Mediterranean Expedi-

BACK IN ATHENS

tionary Force, and of the Levant Base is all one ; the Glory equal and the Majesty co-eternal.

Such as Egypt is, such is the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, and such is the Levant Base.

Egypt separate, the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force separate, and the Levant Base separate.

Egypt incomprehensible, the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force incomprehensible, and the Levant Base incomprehensible.

Egypt futile, the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force futile, and the Levant Base futile ; and yet there are not three futiles but one futile.

And also there are not three incomprehensibles, nor three separates ; but one inchoate and one incomprehensible.

So likewise is Egypt almighty, the Mediterranean Force almighty, and the Levant Base almighty : and yet there are not three almighties, but one almighty.

So Maxwell is G.O.C., Murray† is G.O.C., and Altham‡ is G.O.C.*

And yet there are not three G.O.Cs, but one G.O.C.

So likewise Maxwell is Boss, Murray is Boss, and Altham is Boss.

And yet there are not three Bosses, but one Boss.

For like as we are compelled by Army Regulations to acknowledge every General himself to be G.O.C. and Boss : so are we forbidden by Lord Kitchener to say there are three G.O.Cs or three Bosses.

Egypt is made of none : but separate and misbegotten.

The Mediterranean Expeditionary Force is of the sea alone ; not ashore, but separate and misbegotten.

The Levant Base is of Egypt and the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force both ashore and separate, but misbegotten and not succeeding.

* Gen. Sir John D. Maxwell, G.C.B.

† Gen. Sir Archibald Murray, G.C.M.G.

‡ Lt.-Gen. Sir Edward Altham, K.C.B.

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

So there is one Egypt, not three Egypts : one Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, not three Mediterranean Expeditionary Forces : one Levant Base, not three Levant Bases.

And in this Trinity none is afore or after ; none is greater or less than the other.

But the whole three Generals are quarrelling together ; and quibbling.

So that in all things as aforesaid, the unity in trinity and the trinity in unity is to be worshipped.

He therefore that will be decorated : must thus think of the trinity.

Furthermore it is necessary to everlasting promotion : that he also believe rightly the appointment of our G.O.C., Sir Archibald Murray.

And the right faith is : that we believe and confess that Sir Archibald Murray is G.O.C. of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force : equal to Maxwell as touching his Troops, but inferior to Maxwell as touching his Administration.

Who although he be G.O.C. of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, yet has not two but one Command.

One altogether, not by confusion of Generals ; but by complexity of Commands.

For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man : so should Murray and Altham be one Command.

We suffered for this reorganization, for Murray descended upon Alexandria ; rose again the second day with a disordered brain.

He ascended into Cairo, and sitteth on the top of Maxwell, G.O.C. almighty : whence he shall come to take the Troops, the quick and the dead.

At whose coming all men shall rise again with their brevets : and shall immediately proceed to damn each other's works.

And they that have done this well shall go into the Honours

BACK IN ATHENS

List everlasting : and they that have done evil into everlasting retirement.

This is the Mediterranean Faith : which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be promoted.

Glory be to Egypt, and to the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, and to the Levant Base : as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be

Chaos without end.

Amen.

To the figures of Generals contending for supremacy must be added that of Sir Henry M'Mahon,* the British High Commissioner. Not that Sir Henry himself ever bothered to contend ; he had a greater regard for good shooting and good sailing than for his own importance. But he was the mouthpiece of the Civil Authority, and the Civil Authority was contending all the time with the Military.

It must have been now that a request came from the Residency to do all that was possible to supervise the passenger traffic between Greece and Egypt, that Wace with Tucker to help him, as I have related prematurely, began interviewing prospective passengers in the hall of the Legation, and that Consuls were instructed to refer all such applicants to Athens for the Consular visé. Inquiries into the references of these applicants kept our men busy enough, though there was plenty to keep them busy without that.

I instituted at 3 Visarionos a large question-book in which section chiefs were set puzzles for the sub-agents under them to solve. At the same time another large book for the answers was started, in which Tucker had to enter up the solutions. Later the answers were all incorporated in our files, and the answer book was destroyed ; but the

* Col. Sir Henry M'Mahon. G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O., K.C.I.E., C.S.I.

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

question book I still have and it may serve to give some idea of our work at this date if I reproduce some of the questions that occupied us during the last fortnight of 1915.

1. Who is Madame Ph— who often visits the office of Baron Schenck ?
2. Philandros is to furnish us with a confidential report on the present condition of the Anatolian refugees. He must also move about more at night, his expenses being paid, and keep an eye open for any refugees who seem to have money to spend.
3. Clarence must complete his information about this M— who is reported to question passengers arriving in steamers from Mudros about the movements of Allied warships.
4. Clarence is to keep an eye on the Bulgarian Consulate in the Piræus. These reports about Bulgarian officers meeting there must either be definitely confirmed or contradicted.
5. Clarence is to see that one of his men keeps a check on anybody loitering on the quay when a British destroyer or dispatch vessel comes into the Piræus.
6. Clarence to check report regarding the person G— described as being on board S.S. *Spetzai* at Patras, and establish identity.
7. Clarence to check report of wireless installation in M—'s house at Castella. Also P—'s house at end of Hippocrates Street.
Naval Attaché wants these urgently.
8. Clarence to supplement report on N— K— tendered by Papeconomou and Servos.
9. Clarence to inquire about Sahag Nesrop Hatchadourian. Clean-shaven, fair, wound mark under left side of chin. Said to frequent 18, S— Street. Correct name and identity to be ascertained.

BACK IN ATHENS

10. Cavour to find out truth of report that K— has an office with two young men working in it. Its address. Identity of young men. Is one of them C— S— who went to Patras with him on or about November 12th?
11. Christides to give description of H— D— who left for Constantinople via Oxilar and Larissa on December 8th.
12. Cavour to obtain answers from B— to questionnaire about rifles said to be hidden at Chalkis.
This is urgent.
13. Vlaikos to find out all he can about Watney Hyde.* Mr. Tucker has his description, etc.
14. Vlaikos to find out about C— A— B— who describes himself as 'Consul de la Republique Dominicaine et de Liberia en Grèce.'
15. Clarence to investigate report from French Consul about Bedross Chassounian.
16. Clarence to inquire into report of S.S. *Hrvatska*, flying Greek flag and alleged to be communicating with enemy submarines as reported to Naval Attaché.

In all these reports about Greek ships and submarines it is important to ascertain the previous relations between the informant and the owners. And once more I wish agents to believe that every statement of this kind is probably a lie and to test it with that supposition in their minds. The Naval Attaché and myself are not consulting palmists, but men presumed to have the elements of common sense.

Z.

17. Naval Attaché requires urgent information about contraband said to be run by M— and L—. See report. Cavour to investigate meaning of the

* His career is a tit-bit in store.

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

telegrams to Barcelona, and alleged connexion direct and indirect with German Consul.

18. Cavour to furnish report of persons whom he knows to be now at Salonica and whom he has a reason to suspect.
19. Commercial Department requires urgently the present name of ship belonging to H— D— which changed name and flag by fictitious sale. Also any previous names.
20. Cavour to find H— British subject of Constantinople now in Athens, and bring him to Legation by appointment to give information about passport and nationality of M—L—S— now under arrest at Mudros.
21. Philandros to find out *who* the two important persons are who according to his report are hiding in the Turkish Consulate in Piræus. *These vague reports are worse than useless. They merely waste time. Z.*
22. Weir to find out about S— a waiter at the Panhellenion who went to Egypt. Full name, description, and date of departure. *Cairo has wired urgently for this. Z.*
23. Weir to find out if G— went by S.S. *Spetzai* from Piræus and Patras on December 1st when Colonel Napier left Athens.
24. For Weir's men. It has been reported that M— E— alias M— M—*, who was formerly employed by us as an agent at Cavalla and who after being sacked joined the German organization, went recently to the Islands, but returned here. Control this. He must be watched and any further sea-trip at once reported.
25. Clarence to see Smuggler in Piræus (K— P—)

* We nabbed this fellow presently on the high seas, and he spent the rest of the war in Malta.

BACK IN ATHENS

formerly employed by Russian S/Service, and find out his conditions for working for us on contraband spotting.

26. And what about that smuggler at Chalkis recommended by Pappas? Terms, etc.
27. French want to know if M— M— from Constantinople leaves by Messageries S.S. *Sydney*. Very urgent. Clarence to do this without fail.
28. Weir to find out to whom motor car numbers 2 and 273 belong and whom they took to Laurium at 3.30 p.m. on December 11th.
29. Weir to track a certain E—. Description and haunts available. He is being shadowed by a German agent, and he is communicating here with an agent of the Vali of Smyrna.

This business must be carried through with extreme discretion as we do not want to alarm the Vali. Z.

30. For Weir. Antonio F—, Austrian, in banking business, arrived from Constantinople on December 11th, via Salonica in Greek steamer. Staying at Hotel Hermes. Find out object of his coming here, also if and when he intends to leave. Is he really an Austrian subject? Full description wanted.

This is wanted for the Italian Military Attaché. Z.

31. For Weir. Spiro Aga reported by French as enemy agent. Wants to go to Tripoli and Egypt. He must be shadowed for a week and report sent in.
32. For Weir. Find out if Sami Bey and his brother Ashref Bey really are in Athens and if so report their movements.
33. For Clarence. You reported a certain N— to be a German agent. Give source of information and reasons for such a statement. *I do not expect section-chiefs to bring me this kind of bald information. Z.*
34. For Clarence. *The rumour you report from a worthless*

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

fellow like S— is probably worthless. Do not waste time over such trifles when you have not answered questions of greater urgency and importance. Z.

35. *Cavour to tell X— to send all his military stuff to M at the Legation. I do not want military reports brought to me. Let this be a clear rule for all section-chiefs. Z.*
36. For Weir. Charalambos Aivatoglou, agent of Committee of Union and progress now at Hotel Paris to be shadowed. A crescent is stamped on the top of his head to show that he belongs to the Young Turk Committee. He may be on a secret mission. He is partner in S.S. *Nicolas* of the Piræus. 810 tons register.
37. For Weir. Who is G— V— staying at Palace Hotel, who wants permit for 259 tins of benzene for Argostoli? He is reported to have offered 100 drachmas for a permit.
38. For Weir. Was it the long narrow car in C—garage belonging to young man called K—which went to Sunium?

Return note from Commercial Department on this subject. Z.

39. Has Hoffmann* who is reported to have returned lately from a second visit to Germany via Sofia come back to the Piræus?
40. For Weir. Have you found out anything more about this alleged benzene depôt in a house behind the Italian Legation? Are they still moving stuff by night? Whose is the house and what is the correct address?

Once more I must insist that we are not here to gossip, but to work. I expect section-chiefs to set the example to their sub-agents. Z.

* This was he who turned out to be the cleverest German agent in the Eastern Mediterranean.

BACK IN ATHENS

41. For Weir. Have C—B—, the cinema agent closely watched, and advise me immediately he leaves. If he goes to Corinth, agent must follow him. This man must *not* be lost sight of.
42. *For Weir. No more tips to be wasted on the porter of the A— Hotel.*
43. For Clarence. Mytilene has informed Commercial Department that Leonidas A—of Troumba, Piræus, heard from a Smyrna workman about a sailing vessel in communication with a German submarine off Cape Colonna. Can further details be obtained?
44. For Clarence. Investigate a report that the Transægean Shipping Company facilitate contraband of goods by taking a percentage of the profits.

I have picked out these questions almost at random from a couple of hundred or more, and there would have been just as many puzzles which were set orally.

Yet it was idle to pretend that all this energy was getting us anywhere. We might hope that several captures at sea of suspects and the subsequent detention of them at Malta would have a salutary effect on the casual rascal; but it soon became evident that a really clever man like Hoffmann should be able to outwit us with ease. He was an ex-lieutenant in the German Army who had resigned for some reason or other. He had been for many years now a commission-agent in the Piræus, and was only called up to the colours in 1915. He was then sent back to Greece to undertake the task of obtaining military information about the Allies on several fronts. He depended directly on the German Staff in Berlin and had nothing to do either with Schenck or his own Legation. When he started this autumn he started as an amateur like most of us in the Intelligence, and had it not been for the impossibility of securing any co-operation we should have incriminated some of his first

agents successfully. Could an early example have been made even of one of them, Hoffmann might have found his work much more difficult. But impunity made him bold and, although our methods of contre-espionage improved, his methods of espionage more than kept pace with them.

It is tempting to continue this tale of Hoffmann until he surrendered to me personally in September, 1916; but I should spoil the effect I am anxious to convey of the uninhabited deserts of ignorance, about which were dotted a few small green (too green sometimes) oases of information, in which we existed at this date. After the months I spent in trying to build up feasible theories about hostile activity, all of which were liable to be shattered at any moment, it is not surprising that to this day my gorge rises at the notion of reading the detective fiction which provides leisure and recreation for my more thoughtful contemporaries, though it will never help them to be detectives. Experience after all really is the only thing that counts. By the time I was finished with Intelligence work I could tell infallibly by just glancing at a report whether it was worth the paper it was written on. When I look back to that early collection of eggs from mares' nests we hoarded so proudly, I blush.

However, even in this confused and anxious December of 1915, the first dark-lantern with which we were to light up the shrouded interior of the German Legation was put into my hands.

So many candidates for secret employment used to present themselves that the precise method which the agent I called Davy Jones took to offer his services eludes recollection. But I know that Tucker fenced with him for some time before I agreed to let him put his proposals before me. As he absolutely refused to accept anybody but myself for the interview and stipulated that he was to make the rendezvous, Tucker feared a plot to eliminate me. We had been having more and more trouble with the Palace police

under Captain Chryssospathi, who by this time were already making it clear that the Government party had decided to stamp out Venizelism and who because they supposed Venizelism to depend entirely upon the success of the Entente were determined at the same time to do whatever they could to hinder the effective resistance of the Entente to the threat of the Central Powers in Macedonia. It must be remembered that, during these anxious December days, the Allied forces were falling back upon Salonica and that the possibility of the enemy's driving them into the sea began to appear to many supporters of the King's policy something not far removed from an extremely welcome probability. At this date communication by telegram and courier between Athens and Berlin was incessant, not to say intimate, and the documents found at Salonica when at last the enemy Consulates were seized proved the complicity of members of the Government in schemes to further German interests in every way that offered itself. Motor-cars were leaving Athens with the German mail, actually escorted sometimes by police. It would have been perfectly easy to eliminate an undesired person from Athens and hand him over to the first enemy outpost south of Monastir. It is necessary to make this clear, for otherwise V's precautions before leaving will have sounded preposterous. The effect on the imagination of the capture of Napier and Wilson was considerable. What had begun on sea might be expected to continue on land.

Believing as I did that the safest thing to do when you saw a man going to hit you was to hit him first, I was from the first an opponent to even the least appearance of courtesy toward this new body of secret police, because it was clear that courtesy would inevitably be mistaken for nervousness. I saw no reason to make a pretence of accepting the deliberately untrue assertion of the Government that these secret police were nothing but a small body

attached to the personal service of the King. In the end after trying to get rid of me by shooting from behind a hedge, by rolling a boulder down in front of the car, and by loosening the wheels of the car, they shot my house up with two machine guns and a couple of hundred rifles. Do not let me suggest a grievance against the other side. They were quite justified from their point of view in what they did. The only point I wish to make clear is that they began it. That in drawing the fire figuratively I might end in drawing it literally was to be foreseen. I neglected no reasonable precaution. Still, the fascination of this game was so potent that I had really no time to feel afraid. It used to seem all the while as if I were playing a game of backgammon with the other side, and though it is true that one's opponent may pick up the board and bang one on the head with it, it is not the usual conclusion of a game of backgammon, though I may mention that such was the method which the poet Tennyson adopted to bring to an end a losing game he was playing with my father-in-law, E. D. Stone.

I think it was Davy Jones's contemptuous remarks in his preliminary letters about my existing agents which first won my heart. To be told that the heads of most of those in my employment were full of beans delighted my sense of the fact. I had myself shaken them so often and heard them rattle. A horse-loving nation like the English has used fullness of beans to express the well-being of energy. A horse-despising sun-dried nation like the Greek regards a bag of beans from another angle.

In spite of Tucker's protests, I determined to give Davy Jones the personal interview he asked; and, from the first moment I saw the little man with his mousy hair and pale ragged moustache, his very pale blue eyes filmed with suspicion and furtiveness almost as if by a visible cataract, I recognized in him the authentic spy, the spy by nature. We

knew already that he was the porter of the German Legation, which was promising if the man himself should have the gifts to take advantage of such a position. And Davy Jones had them all. At that very first interview it was evident he was in a class apart. His character sketches of the Legation Staff were on a different level from any I had heard hitherto, and his physical descriptions were brilliant in their capacity to provide the essentials. People I had grown tired of hearing of as possessing medium builds, dark eyes, dark complexions, medium noses, medium mouths, brown hair, and blue serge suits, lived at last in that furtive little man's representations of them, his cold delicate clammy hands drawing their personalities, one could fancy, from the very air around, his pale blue eyes lighted with the glow of passion, and sometimes seeming absolutely to curdle in an ecstasy of imaginative evocation. He treated this sorry material in the spirit of an artist. Nothing escaped him, from the effect of a visitor on the Military Attaché's mood to the way in which that visitor had rung the bell and inquired if Major von Falkenhausen was at liberty. Nothing escaped him, neither the minutest shred of paper in the Minister's wastepaper-basket nor the nail print of the Marine Attaché's forefinger upon a map. But funds were low, and I had to spend most of that first interview in haggling over terms. He asked 800 drachmas a month together with out-of-pocket expenses for such things as carriages.

"No out-of-pocket expenses," I said sharply. "If you start driving about in carriages, the people at the Legation will ask at once how you can afford to do that on a monthly salary of 150 francs."

The little man made an impatient gesture.

"I am not being one fool like those fellows of yours who blow themselves out to be big and can't make no informations, but only charlatanisms which are not good

for you. If I can take the carriage, it is for because I must."

Baboo English, but behind it such passion !

"Very well, I accept the out-of-pocket expenses. But 800 drachmas is more than we can afford until you prove yourself worth it."

"The glorious British nation cannot to pay 800 drachmas to one poor devil of one Greek porter ?" asked the candidate sarcastically.

"The glorious British nation cannot afford to pay anybody 800 drachmas a month until he justifies it by the value of his information."

In the end, after haggling for an hour, I agreed to pay Davy Jones a salary of 600 drachmas, which was to rise at the rate of a hundred a month to a thousand if he retained my confidence and produced the material. Where the money was coming from when I made this arrangement I did not know ; but I was resolved to give Davy Jones a good trial even if I had to spend money on him from my own pocket. At this first interview I had recognized the genuine article, and I was not going to lose it. My confidence was more than justified. For over six months I interviewed Davy Jones three times a week, and through him we kept ourselves well-informed of the most intimate details of existence at the German Legation. It is difficult to avoid a suggestion of complacency in pointing out the tremendous difficulty of keeping an agent like that uncompromised in a city of the size of Athens where public attention, official attention, and hostile attention were all concentrated upon our work. I kept Davy Jones's employment by us a secret from the Germans themselves, a secret from the redoubtable if slightly comic Palace police, a secret from my own men, and a secret from the very large French Intelligence which was presently to percolate through Athens. In this I was of course enormously helped by the

cleverness of Davy Jones himself, whose acting at the German Legation must have been superb, to enable him to carry off the excuses which his frequent entrances into the various rooms of the Legation entailed. He spoke English well enough to give me all his facts and descriptions with the help of a little French; but he spoke German better, and he understood Italian. So he was able in passing through a room to pick up what was being said, and he had such an accurate memory that I always received word for word what he had overheard without any embroidery. He never tried to justify himself by sensational stories. If for a fortnight he had nothing but dull information to bring me, he had enough confidence in my common sense to feel sure that I should welcome the dull truth more warmly than the exciting lie. He had indeed for me the cordial devotion of an artist for a critic who, he feels, appreciates his work and understands the fatigue and patience and care which have gone to the production of it. Thanks to Davy Jones I learnt during the last week of December more about the German organization of espionage in Athens than we had learnt during the preceding nine months, and it was really due to the solid facts with which he provided me that I was able to make the co-operation of our ill-equipped and ill-defined section of the amorphous Eastern Mediterranean Special Intelligence Bureau (hereinafter to be known as the E.M.S.I.B.) indispensable to the grand new French Bureau des Renseignements, which was now to be installed in Athens and by its installation leave an indelible mark upon the history of modern Greece.

The first intimation I had of this new force was a message from Sells asking me to go round to his room in the Legation and meet the new French Naval Attaché. They formed a good contrast, these two shouting away most cordially at one another; the Frenchman in a barbarous lingo intended to be English, the Englishman in fourth form French: Sells

with his long legs and big beaky nose and slightly untidy hair, his expression of perfect good-nature and schoolboy's laugh, Comte de Roquefeuil dapper, small, with bright restless blue eyes, with fair moustache now almost quite grey, voluble and confident in the infallibility of his own opinions. Both men were Commanders ; but Sells, who was then thirty-four, must have been de Roquefeuil's junior by ten years. The conversation after a minute or two was conducted entirely in French, which did not give Sells and me the moral advantage it should have given, because de Roquefeuil in surrendering to the badness of his English made it clear that he was surrendering like so many other Frenchmen not so much to his own lack of education as to the invincible barbarism of the English language. The tone in which he said: "*Alors, parlons français,*" was that in which he might have answered that he was tired of pursing up his lips and making odd noises to ingratiate himself with a couple of rather stupid canaries.

"*Vous ne trouvez pas mon français tout à fait mauvais ?*" Sells inquired, peering down into his colleague's brisk little face.

"*Mais au contraire !*" cried de Roquefeuil, his tones rising up the scale in congratulatory if somewhat condescending enthusiasm. "*Vous parlez français très très bien.*"

This compliment evoked roars of laughter from Sells accompanied by much rib-digging of de Roquefeuil, who looked at first a little inclined to snap at Sells's fingers like a terrier which is being patted too boisterously by a stranger.

I shall not attempt to reproduce any more of Sells's French, because he is now an Admiral and a lingering respect for the broad gold stripe forbids my ribald pen.

"Captain de Roquefeuil is going to start the new French Bureau de Renseignements here," he told me. Then he turned to his colleague to explain that I already had a Bureau in full blast.

"Ah," said de Roquefeuil with kindly contempt, "I had not heard of it in Paris. But I do not think that you are doing very much."

I felt inclined to say that we were doing a great deal more than the French had done hitherto. However, there was no need for me to criticize the existing state of French Intelligence, for de Roquefeuil himself obliterated it in a few scathing sentences. And then he went on to speak of what his own organization intended to do. They were going to occupy the French Archæological School at the top of Sina Street which was to be made extra-territorial. Wireless was to be installed which would connect the School directly with Salonica and all the islands. There were to be a splendid photographic studio with all the latest improvements including colour photography, a chemical laboratory, half-a-dozen automobiles, and unlimited funds. The two Military Attachés would be installed at the School in direct communication with G.Q.G. Salonica. De Roquefeuil himself with the Assistant Naval Attaché, Hector de Béarn, would direct a large Bureau of naval Intelligence with agents everywhere to deal with submarines and contraband, and there would be another French naval officer in charge of an active branch at the Piræus. Then there was to be a very large propaganda service to counterbalance and if possible destroy the abominable activities of Baron Schenck. Finally, under Engineer-Captain Ricaud there would be a *service de renseignements et contre-espionage*. He was not yet arrived, but it would give de Roquefeuil great pleasure to present him to me.

"And it will give me much pleasure," I said quickly, "to put all our available information about the enemy's activities in Athens at the disposal of M. Ricaud."

Although the new French Naval Attaché thanked me for my politeness, I could see he did not suppose my offer was of the slightest practical value.

"I think that we shall soon be able *dépister et débrouiller* all this espionage of Baron Schenck," he declared confidently. And I can recall the actual verbs he used in French, for the second one was new to me.

"But you must not think, *mon capitaine*, that Baron Schenck is responsible for all the espionage in Greece. The longer I study the problem, the more convinced I am that we have devoted too much attention to Baron Schenck. With your equipment you will be able to counteract his newspaper propaganda, but without our help you will waste weeks in trying to find out what we are only beginning to find out now with any accuracy. I shall be delighted to put the result of our experience at the disposal of M. Ricaud. If he finds that our information is useless to him, we shall at any rate have done our best to show the cordiality we feel toward our Allies. Should we be fortunate enough to be of real service, we shall have expressed that cordiality in a practical fashion."

This all sounds very pompous in English, but one can talk like this in French without being ridiculous.

De Roquefeuil assured me that he had no intention *froisser* the good will I had shown and promised that as soon as Ricaud arrived in Athens he should collaborate with me in the friendliest spirit; but he was evidently still sceptical, and Sells sailed in:

"Vous savez, celui est un auteur."

"*Ah non, par exemple, il n'y a pas d'hauteur. Au contraire j'estime beaucoup la bonne volonté dont il a . . .*"

"No, no," Sells interrupted. "Auteur! Écrivain! Raconteur! Il écrit les livres."

De Roquefeuil responded at once to this, and even when he heard that my books were novels remained impressed by what would finally have damned my pretensions in the eyes of an Englishman in his position.

"I think the little man was shaken," said Sells when the new French Naval Attaché had left us.

"Not till you told him I was a novelist."

Sells shook his head.

"Queer birds the French. Still, I think he's going to make things buzz in Athens."

I agreed, but neither Sells nor I had the ghost of an inkling at that moment how loud a buzz it would be.

The secret of de Roquefeuil's plenipotentiary powers was his intimate personal friendship with Rear-Admiral Lacaze, the Minister of Marine in M. Briand's Government. He had married into the Mumm family and, being a man of considerable means with wide social connexions, he was able to wield an influence and an independence far beyond that of the average *capitaine de frégate*.

It will be wiser to allow de Roquefeuil's effect on the situation to reveal itself through succeeding volumes. I find myself hardening in the opinion that for the follies which have been charged to Sarraïl and de Roquefeuil the British Government must be held primarily responsible. However, readers who have the patience to follow me to the end of a long task will be able to judge for themselves.

That offer of mine to put all information at the disposal of the new French Bureau was not dictated by any sudden premonition of the part its head would play. I was merely anxious to act consistently with those principles of co-ordination in the work of Intelligence for which I was always pleading. Within a very short time I was to divine the momentous potentialities of a strait and sincere co-operation with the French in the Eastern Mediterranean, and I devoted myself to achieving and maintaining joint action whenever and wherever it seemed advantageous, while at the same time keeping Sir Francis Elliot accurately informed of immediate and ultimate French policy. The complete failure of the British Government to control the

future of the Levant was evidence of a diminishing Imperial inspiration which the years since the war have seen diminish still further. We are paying in Egypt and in India now for the evacuation of Gallipoli, and we have not yet paid in full. But the evil effect of Gallipoli was intensified by our surrender to the Turks in 1922, and that surrender was the direct result of the flaccid policy pursued in Greece during 1916 and 1917. I have written policy ; but the behaviour of Great Britain in allowing herself unwillingly to be dragged along by the French like a child being taken to the dentist can hardly be dignified by a name of such positive significance. There was an opportunity to go forward in full co-operation with France. It was not accepted. There was an opportunity to build up a strong Greece with King Constantine. It was not accepted. There was an opportunity to build up a strong Greece with M. Venizelos alone. It was not accepted. There was an opportunity to make Great Britain mistress of the Levant. It was not accepted.

These reflections have been prompted by the picture in my mind of that little French naval officer marching out of Sells's room that December day in 1915. He looked so very much determined to do something.

"But we shall never do anything," I said to Sells with a lamentably infallible prescience.

CHAPTER XV

THE END OF THE YEAR

IN the middle of so much financial anxiety and with the New Year drawing very near without a word of what money we could count on, a welcome surprise was the sudden arrival from Crete of a Ford car which, driven by a private in the Army Service Corps, Adam Robertson, had been at the disposal of Rawlins, the Consul at Canea. I suspected that the car was not intended for us at all, because V had never mentioned its coming. However, if it was really meant for the use of the Commercial Department, I bluffed them out of it successfully and wrote off hastily to thank V for his thoughtfulness in securing for us this second car. Far more precious than the car itself, which broke its back a few weeks later, were the services of Robertson, who was to other chauffeurs what the Sunbeam was to other cars, and to whom the Sunbeam would certainly have accorded much of the credit for its own perfect behaviour. He was not only a magnificent driver whether at sixty miles an hour or at six, but he was also a first-class mechanic with a maternal devotion to his engine. I used sometimes to watch him oiling it or filling it with petrol, and really he would wear the expression of a mother suckling her child. He became a valued friend and remained with me in close attendance until I left Greece in the autumn of 1917. He was at the wheel during many an exciting quarter of an hour, and during several that were rather too exciting to be pleasant; but there was never a sign on Robertson's countenance that he was not driving

the car at a leisurely pace along a wide country road on a fine afternoon in England. His discretion was extreme, and his manner with the Athenians had always the amused benevolence of one who was watching kittens at play. In 1922 he was engineer in my motor-boat *Aphrodite* when she was second in the race from London to Cowes, one of the very few craft to complete the course in the full gale that was blowing all the way. He found that experience more trying than any of the strange adventures that happened to him in Greece.

Robertson had one great ambition, which was to be promoted to corporal. It might have been easier to get him created a duke: it would certainly have been easier, had he only been driving in London, to get him made a lieutenant-colonel. However, it was managed at last after a dogged correspondence, much to everybody's pleasure but particularly to that of Clarence, who thenceforward never alluded to Robertson except as The Corporal, rolling the rich word over on his big tongue as a schoolboy a chocolate-cream. Looking back on what I did during the war, I am inclined to call my most notable achievements the obtaining of a commission for Tucker and the promotion of Robertson to the rank of corporal.

The Manager of the company engaged upon the draining of Lake Copais had invited Sells and myself to spend Christmas with them. I was too busy to allow myself more than two days off; but I settled to drive Sells there on Christmas Eve and to drive back alone on Christmas Day. Not wanting to take Markham away from his wife at this season, I arranged that Robertson should drive us in the Sunbeam, which was the first time I enjoyed his perfect driving, and decided me to make him responsible for the Sunbeam when the Ford broke up.

I recall little of the drive out through wild country over about seventy miles of bad and beautiful roads, for I

THE END OF THE YEAR

think I spent most of the time in talking earnestly and volubly to Sells about the future of our Bureau which, though it was beginning to assume wider and wider responsibilities daily, was completely in the air about its status in relation to other Intelligence centres and was at the same time being unpleasantly chilled by doubts of its ability to carry on at all, unless some money were very soon forthcoming.

It was on this drive, I fancy, that Sells suggested as a way out of our difficulties that he should ask for leave from the Minister to go back and see what could be done in London about getting the whole show put on a satisfactory basis.

Toward dusk we drove through the muddy swine-thronged main street of a squalid little town, and with awe, after an incredulous question of some loiterer, I heard that this was indeed seven-gated Thebes. In travelling through the United States I had often enough laughed at the woeful parodies of classic cities which some of those wretched burgs ventured to suggest by their pretentious names. But I saw nowhere in the Middle West quite so barbarous a mockery of the past as modern Thebes provided of its own former greatness. And it had been Thebes which had most bitterly advocated the utter destruction of Athens nearly 2,500 years ago.

The first shock produced by this wretched street, with its lounging staring black-coated Bæotians, a race as anti-pathetic now as it was ever famed to be, passed. The solemnity of beholding this cradle of mighty legends overcame the sordid present.

“Drive more slowly, Robertson, for a while.”

Upon the slopes of Cithaeron, round which we had driven, the baby Œdipus with pierced feet had lain exposed to the wolves that still haunted these wooden heights. By the road we came he had come to fulfil his dreadful fate and wed

with his mother. Above that road the Sphinx had brooded ravenously. By that road had marched the Seven to fight against Thebes. And somewhere near at hand the most glorious heroine of tragedy, Antigone herself, had sprinkled pious dust upon the corpse of her brother Polynices and died serenely. My fancy leapt back to a class-room at St. Paul's, one of those too many dreary class-rooms denied sun and quiet by an improvident architect and the foolish governors who approved his plan. Above the rumble of the red horse-omnibuses along the Hammersmith Road I was thrilling inwardly in response to that last line spoken to the thought of Haemon, her betrothed, and in scorn of Creon, his father and her unnatural uncle.

ὦ φίλταθ' Αἴμον, ὥς σ' ἀτιμάζει πάτηρ

O dearest Haemon, how thy father doth dishonour thee.

But it is impossible to express in English the poignant sweetness of that Greek superlative, as impossible as to express the equally poignant reproach of Medea's superlative uttered to Jason: ὦ παγκράκιστε, *O most evil of men.*

They have both remained with me from construes close upon thirty-five years ago as revelations of a simple word's power. I was a boy of fourteen when I read the *Antigone*, the noisiest and most mischievous of a noisy and mischievous class, a leader of revolt against the intolerable boredom of school, a baiter of authority, and a reckless comedian. Yet I was often hard put to avoid disgracing myself by tears when we were construing the *Antigone* and my dread of being discovered to like such tosh was probably concealed by behaviour much more worthy of Creon than of that adored heroine. I know it was about this date that, having been ejected from the class-room for rowdy behaviour, I unhooked the fig-leaves from some of the plaster casts of great statues in the school corridors, a piece of

THE END OF THE YEAR

audacity which was much applauded by my compeers and by them considered a most suitable expression of our war against Greek.*

It was dark when we reached the house of the Manager where we found other friends from the Naval Mission and spent a jolly evening of games and dances. Strange how the memory works. I cannot remember who any of those other guests were, nor do I remember either game or dance or even dinner. But I can still see with perfect clarity the empty polished floor of the drawing-room and a pile of brightly coloured cushions in a corner on the left hand side of the door.

The next morning was a true December halcyon, and I played one desperate game of tennis in which Sells, clothed in a white sweater, and myself seemed to expend most of our energy in ungovernable laughter at the strokes made by the other. It was hard to tear oneself away; but before noon Robertson and I in the Sunbeam were on the way back to Athens.

We stopped for lunch where a bridge crossed a purling stream. Parnassus towered divinely white in a hazy blue distance. The gashed and riven sides of Helicon were visible, and close at hand a gentle voice whispered among the pine-trees of Cithaeron. This was the Muses' countryside, and the water in this stream, for whose name I searched in vain a most inadequate map, was pellucid as the waters of Castalia or Hippocrene. I leaned against the mossy parapet of the bridge and listened to a solitary bee humming about that warm wintry peace of the South. The tutelary Naiad of the stream was somewhere near by. I was almost tempted to warn Robertson not to draw the corks too loudly

* By an astonishing coincidence, the day after I wrote this reminiscence of the *Antigone*, I came across in an old bundle of school notebooks lost to sight for many years a translation of the first great chorus in honour of Thebes, which must have been written out as a penal task for some outrage during our study of the *Antigone* in the year 1897.

lest he should frighten her. We munched our bread and cheese, ruminating like the long-horned cattle in the rank pastures of the vale beyond. And when we had finished our lunch, we still lingered in this easeful spot.

The air at this midday hour was balmy as a northern April with the quickening fragrance of the earth. No birds were singing; but the stream purled along over ash-grey pebbles, and among the wooded slopes of Cíthaeron a hundred hidden rills warbled unceasingly. This was the Muses' country, of Muses older than the Immortal Nine, of Mélete and Mneme and Aoide. Not far from this spot were the holy springs haunted by the presence of Meditation, Memory, and Song, more ancient sanctuaries of the human mind than Tragedy or Comedy or History. But about these hills and vales the Immortal Nine wandered too, and the fancy came to me that when the war was over I would return here, a suppliant for their favour to decree what my own small measure of art should obtain from such an experience. And though I have never again leaned against the parapet of that bridge beside the pines of Cíthaeron I may feel that Mneme herself did direct my ultimate choice of a medium, for as I write these words, while wintry Notus lashes the sea and rages round the house, the memory of that halcyon day fifteen Decembers ago steals upon my senses until I smell again the pine-trees of Cíthaeron, hear again the murmur of those hidden rills, and see again beyond the frail blue of the wintry sky Parnassus divinely clear and white. And I linger over that scene in memory, unwilling now as then to drag myself away and drive on to Athens. Robertson and I waited there, as quiet as the flies that pressed their glittering bodies against the warm stone of the parapet. A silver train of Oreads danced along the bright snows of Parnassus. Dryads and Meliads stirred among the trees. A Naiad floated down the stream, singing to herself a low sweet

THE END OF THE YEAR

song. Despise not, reader, this simple animism of mine. Even the Sunbeam felt the natural magic of the place and stood there sentient as a listening live thing. I had spent a full year. I had written what I believed to be the best book I had written. I had played a very minor but much absorbed part at Gallipoli. I had discovered in Athens an entirely new field for adventure and knowledge of human beings. Where should I be next Christmas Day? To what added experience and intensity of living should I look back at the end of the coming year? How long would it be before the tormented world would seem as tranquil as here it seemed in this country of the Muses?

Reluctantly I took my place again in the car. Robertson bent over the handle. A moment later the Sunbeam lost that lovely stillness in which it had been dreaming, and with the pulsation of the engine my own eclogue of meditation was complete. I looked back to catch a last glimpse of that scene which had given

*To one brief moment caught from fleeting time
The appropriate calm of blest eternity.*

In the first chapter of this volume I related an absurd motor accident. Now, as we were driving along very slowly indeed, because the metal of the road was too thin to prevent the rock out of which it had been cut from rising everywhere in large rounded protuberances, we had met a rustic cart in which were driving an old peasant and three voluminously clothed and hideous old women, the four of them sitting in a row on a plank. When he saw the approaching car, the old man pulled back the horse almost on to its haunches and leaping down tried to cover the wretched animal's head with the sack on which he had been sitting. The horse alarmed by its master's behaviour started to plunge back, and the wheels of the cart slipped

down a low bank on the left side of the road, precipitating the three hideous old women heels over head into the grass at the fringe of an olive grove. They went over like figures in a slow-motion film, and the three of them remained for a second or two upside down, looking with the numerous petticoats around their nether anatomies like three Tudor roses. Then the trio recovered their dignity, scrambled to their feet, and with a ludicrous unanimity of gesture flung out their gnarled fingers to execrate Robertson and me with a simultaneous 'Nah!' Neither of us had enough Greek to sustain an argument. So, after standing up in the car and shrugging our shoulders to express our conviction that the accident was not our fault, we drove on; and as we turned round a bend in the road I looked back to see the old peasant and his three female companions still standing with their thirty-two fingers and eight thumbs wide apart and still presumably cursing us with venomous 'Nahs!'

"The horse was all right till he threw that sack over the poor brute," Robertson observed.

"Perfectly," I agreed.

Robertson shook his head.

"Funny people the Greeks!"

I explained that from time immemorial the Bœotians had been considered a peculiarly crass and clownish race. And presently I was back in that class-room trying to remember what happened in a piece of Greek prose composition "about a certain Bœotian" to illustrate this boorishness; but I could only remember that a "certain boy" in the class could not be cured of saying Bœotian, for which we were duly grateful, because it occupied the attention of a persevering master and allowed us to pass the time in more agreeable pursuits than the study of Greek prose.

One of the reasons why I had to be back in Athens was

THE END OF THE YEAR

to eat a jolly Christmas dinner which Sir Francis and Lady Elliot gave annually to the various people connected with the Legation, and another was that I had promised to meet this afternoon my French opposite number Ricaud.

Few men during the war can have had the fortune to work with such a profoundly loyal colleague of another nation, and, though I hope and believe that I have little bitterness left to tinge these memories of mine, I still resent the failure of the British Government to accord him any recognition by decorating him with one of those strips of ribbon that were showered like confetti at a wedding on so many on-lookers during the war. He died about two years ago when hardly forty, and it was Robertson who sent me his brief obituary cut from a French newspaper he had seen on the Riviera.

Ricaud had been a marine engineer at Brest and was, as I remember, serving in Morocco when he was fetched to Athens by de Roquefeuil. I can see him now as he came into 3 Visarionos Street for the first time, a little shy and somewhat overcome by the exuberant cordiality of Tucker's welcome. He was in appearance a characteristic Frenchman of the Midi, small and dark and finely made with lustrous long-lashed eyes that were normally sombre, but the brown depths of which could blaze with fury and sparkle a moment after with their owner's exquisite sense of the ridiculous. Perhaps it was our common pleasure in absurdity which first made us friends, and it was certainly that which above everything else prevented our disagreement. There were times, of course, when Ricaud had to take a line which I could not endorse; but when he felt compelled to do this he was never offended by my refusal to help.

Ricaud was at this time hardly thirty, but with his scrubby dark moustache (which earned him the nickname of Monsieur Brousse), his pallid lined forehead, and a certain

grave maturity in his manner he seemed older. Although he spoke English with much fluency, he preferred to speak French with me, only retaining the habit of using a few English expressions of which he was fond. One of these was 'I concur' delivered with a tremendous roll of the final 'r.' It is pleasant to remember how many times I heard Ricaud say 'I concurr', for it may be accepted as the symbol of our agreement.

When in the spring of 1916 General Sarraill visited Athens and was shown Ricaud's staff working in the Annexe of the British Legation where we had by this date established ourselves, he exclaimed :

"Well, well, the age of miracles is not over, for I now behold the French and English working together under one roof in perfect harmony."

"*Mais, mon général, je suis Écossais,*" I protested.

"This young man will not allow a freethinker to believe in miracles," said Sarraill, turning to his aide-de-camp.

"But it is true, General Mahon is Irish and Admiral de Robeck cannot be English."

So General Sarraill, who when recalled from Syria pointed to the Union Jack as his lifelong and implacable enemy, was not compelled to consider an exception to what he held to be the immutable law of nature which forbids the French and English to agree.

But in December, 1915, Ricaud and I were a long way from seeing the fulfilment of such a wild dream as the institution of a joint Anglo-French Intelligence Bureau would then have appeared.

When Tucker ushered him in that first afternoon, he made a sign that he wanted to ask me something apart.

"You don't want me to give him *all* our stuff, Captain Z?" he pleaded in obvious perturbation.

"Why not?"

"Well, look what it's cost us."

THE END OF THE YEAR

"We're not collectors of information. We are distributors, Tucker."

"Yes, that's all very well. But what are we going to get in return?"

"The confidence of the French."

Tucker shook his head.

"Yes, but I don't see why they should have all the benefit of our work. Look what we're paying Davy Jones. And now just when we're beginning to see where we are with the blooming Germans we go and give it all away."

"I tell you, Tucker, we're not collectors. I'm not proposing to present the French with Davy Jones, but I am proposing to give them the advantage of his work."

"But we can't even get any information out of our own branch in Salonica," Tucker observed, his lips taking that baby's downward pout.

"Which is one very good reason why we should work in accord with the French, who are likely to have much more to say in the working of Salonica than our own people."

"Well, of course, you may know best, Captain Z," Tucker sighed, as he opened the door of the safe and took out the files.

I can see now the expression of bewilderment on Ricaud's face when Tucker covered with papers the checkered cloth of the table at which he was sitting.

"A lot of this material has been potted down on to cards," I explained. "They are now at the Legation, but I will have them brought here for you to go through gradually. We have about fifteen hundred names already, and of course they are increasing rapidly every day."

"But I had no idea you had done all this work," said Ricaud. "I assure you that I appreciate excessively what you are doing for us."

So I left the little dark man, who always seemed the darker because even on the very hottest days of summer he

was usually in dark clothes, sitting at the table in that small room draped with that barbaric pattern in blood-red and powder-blue, left him brooding over that checkered red and blue table-cloth on which the solitary electric light wrapped in a pink shade cast a warm glow. It was time for me to go and dress for dinner. When I came back into the room he was frowning over this unexpected mass of material.

"I shall come here with your permission every evening to work at these papers. For the moment I am without clerical help. But I am expecting assistants very soon. Would you object if I bring one of my assistants here to copy what I tell him?"

"Not at all. He will be French of course?"

"*Ah, ça va sans dire.* A French officer of the Marine."

"To-morrow," I promised, "I will give you an idea of the system on which my organization is arranged. Of course, we shall keep to ourselves our own secret agents?"

"I concur."

"And if I might make a suggestion it is that you will occupy yourself more particularly with Schenck and the German Consul at the Piræus, leaving the German Legation and Hoffmann to me. I am in a good position now to get information about both, and it would be a mistake, I think, to run the risk of spoiling our games by both of us tackling the same places and people."

"I concur."

"At present we have very little money. So I cannot do as much as I should like, but I am always hoping to enlarge our scope."

"I shall be excessively delighted to ask M. de Roquefeuil to contribute from his funds whenever you find yourself in any difficulty. If it is a matter of say 20,000 francs I can assure you that he will be very pleased to place the money at your service."

THE END OF THE YEAR

I gasped. Such a sum was twice the amount I was allowed with which to carry on for a month.

"You are very kind, but I hope that will not be necessary. Still, if I am offered some opportunity for which I lack the money perhaps we might sometimes share the expenses of a coup?"

"You will always find me ready to share anything with you."

And he always was.

For the rest of that month and during most of January Ricaud came regularly every evening to brood over the files and card-index on that checkered tablecloth. He was known for purposes of Intelligence as M. Ménard, and this double existence afforded him a great deal of pleasure. I can hear his chuckle now as he told me one evening that he had received a report one of his agents had extracted from the Bureau of Captain Chryssospathi, the head of the Palace police, in which it was stated that M. Ricaud had had an important appointment at some house with M. Ménard, but that M. Ménard after keeping M. Ricaud waiting for two hours failed to turn up, whereupon M. Ricaud had returned to his Bureau at the French School exceedingly annoyed.

I was never in favour of spying upon the activities of the Greek police, because I could never see any advantage to be gained from it. If the agent were merely venal, his information was unlikely to be of any value; if he were acting on our behalf to express his own political sympathies, he was liable to allow those sympathies to get the better of his truthfulness, and try to make our flesh creep with horrific tales of Royalist plots. My view was that we should at once make it clear to the Greek Government that we did not intend to allow our work to be obstructed by this body of Palace police who had lately usurped the functions of the detective force, and whose chief depended for his orders

directly on King Constantine himself. Unfortunately six months were allowed to elapse before the dismissal of Chryssospathi and the disbandment of the body were demanded, by which time the harm they had done was irreparable. This obnoxious body filled up the King and the entourage of the Court with nursemaids' tales which were apparently gulped down with the voracity of frightened four-year olds. Not merely were they believed at the time; but apologists for King Constantine have not hesitated to give them the pseudo-authority of print. I have many times been tempted to give some of these credulous scribes the lie direct; but, knowing that facts would keep dry longer than fancies, I decided not to waste any ammunition on newspaper skirmishes and help such twaddle to achieve an unmerited publicity.

The result of the farcical Elections of December 19th tempted the Greek Government to exceed decency in its open encouragement to the enemies of the Entente and in its methods to suppress Venizelos and Venizelists. The leader of the Liberal Party had proclaimed that no Liberals would go to the polls as a protest against the unjustifiable dissolution of the Chamber last June. Even if we make full allowance for the effect of the mobilization, the result of this veto was impressive. In June 720,000 electors had recorded their votes. On December 19th, 230,000 went to the polls to elect a Chamber without an Opposition. And this result was not gained merely by abstentions in the Islands and the new territories where Venizelism was naturally predominant. In Athens itself only 7,000 went to the polls compared with 30,000 in the previous June. Yet in commenting on these Elections Mr. G. F. Abbott ventures to write :*

"It may well be doubted whether, had a plebiscite been taken at that moment, he (i.e. Venizelos) would have

* *Greece and the Allies 1914-1922.* (Methuen & Co.)

THE END OF THE YEAR

got more than a substantial minority. Fully conscious of the position, M. Venizelos, in spite of advice from his Entente friends to stand his ground, boycotted the polls."

By an impudent *suppressio veri* Mr. Abbott omits to mention the figures given above, and his omission is a testimony to the damning evidence they provide against his theory of the political situation in Greece at this date.*

Whether M. Venizelos was well advised to refuse to contest the Elections is of course arguable; but if any pressure was brought upon him to do so, I am unaware of it. Let us look at his position. If he were to be re-elected with the same majority as last June he could feel absolutely positive that his policy would be thwarted once again and he could feel almost certain that the Protecting and Guaranteeing Powers would not make any effective attempt to prevent another dissolution as soon as the policy of the Government and the King diverged. If on the other hand his Government remained in power, what power would it possess, with the Army mobilized? The embarrassments of unfriendly acts by the General Staff in Macedonia would be acute, for it would be his Government that would be called upon to deal with them. So long as Greece remained neutral and the Allies remained at Salonica, a Liberal Government would be in an intolerable position. By protesting against the dissolution in a practical way he offered to the Guaranteeing Powers an excuse to intervene on behalf of the Constitution.

However, any argument about the wisdom of Venizelos in refusing to contest the Elections is a waste of time. The history of Greece during the Great War is a long series of unfinished conditional sentences. If 'ifs' and 'ans' were

* I do not want to suggest that there was not strong support for the King's policy. There was. But it was not nearly so strong as poker-backed propagandists like Mr. Abbott try to argue.

pots and pans, there'd be no work for tinkers. And the statecraft of Great Britain in the Levant had much in common with the technique of tinkers. Moreover, the British Government and General Joffre were as firmly resolved as King Constantine himself not to fight in Macedonia. The re-election of Venizelos to power might possibly have changed the history of internal events in Greece, but it would not have affected the military issue at that date. No sooner was the new Government 'elected' than we heard once more the threat of martial law. Meanwhile, as a foretaste of what might be expected under such a régime, the new Government with the warm co-operation of the General Staff and the Court entourage set out to make existence for Venizelists extremely unpleasant. Government spies buzzed around like blue-bottles in August. Plots to overthrow the King were discovered daily. Venizelists were shadowed like thieves, and so busy was the complement of one police-station in doing this that real thieves broke into a jeweller's shop next door and ransacked it. Cars and carriages were held up to search for arms. Venizelist officers were hauled before their superiors and accused of the most fantastic intentions. The more fiery Royalists spoke openly of their desire to fight beside Germany and make an end of Venizelism once for all. Patrols of dreary-looking soldiers wandered about the streets in single file to overawe the population.

The moral effect of that flight from Athens in November had been deplorable, and I found so much nervousness among our agents that I saw we should soon get no work out of them at all. At the end of December the police again ventured to arrest one of them, and I made up my mind that I would give the police something to think about. It was nearly midnight when the news was brought to me. I drove at once to the police-station with Tucker and demanded to see the official in charge. He said he could do

THE END OF THE YEAR

nothing until morning because his superior officer was absent.

"Send for your superior officer at once."

He shrugged his shoulders.

"You refuse?"

"We are not here to take orders from foreigners."

"Very well. I am going to drive immediately to the private house of Colonel Zimbrakakis."

This was the nominal head of the Police and a staunch Venizelist whose days in office were of course numbered.

The officer at the police-station smiled acidly.

"You mean to suggest that the authority of Colonel Zimbrakakis has already been superseded?" I pressed.

He shrugged his shoulders.

"Yes or no? Answer me."

"It is not my business to answer you."

"Very well," I said, pulling forward a chair and sitting down in that bleak white room which smelt so strongly of chloride of lime, "I shall sit here until somebody answers me. And when I have been answered I shall continue to sit here until my employee is taken out of the cells and allowed to go away in my car."

"You can't sit here."

"Very well, then I invite you to turn me out of the police-station."

"I will telephone."

"To Colonel Zimbrakakis?"

"I will telephone."

"To Captain Chryssospathi, eh? Then tell Captain Chryssospathi with my compliments that I shall be very much obliged if he will give you an order to have me arrested. By doing so he will be able to know exactly what I am doing in Athens."

The officer retired to telephone, and presently came back to say that the man arrested had been released and was

at liberty to accompany me away from the police-station.

This proof that the Greek police were not prepared to venture openly anything more than petty annoyance so far as the organization was concerned encouraged our men to get on with their business ; but I regretted the necessity of such a step because it gave the men themselves an exaggerated notion of their own importance. It will be shown in the subsequent history of events that it was the Palace police who created the state of affairs of which they complained. It was they who by inventing revolutionary plots among Venizelists put it into the heads of the French that a revolution was possible.

When I told Sir Francis Elliot about the incident at the police-station, I suggested that he should formally notify the Greek Government of the existence of a Bureau of Information attached to the British Legation and that at the same time he should send in the names of those who belonged to it. The examination of applicants for Egyptian passports was sufficient justification for such a step, and if any further justification were needed, it was provided by the existence of the Commercial Department, the effectiveness of which must depend on information.

"You can say, sir, with perfect sincerity, that we are not interfering with any of the legitimate activities of this country. And you can also say we are not engaged in espionage."

"What about Matthews ?" Sir Francis asked.

"Well, sir, you know I have always thought his presence in the Legation was a mistake. But it may be possible presently to separate his work from ours by giving us a proper clerical staff. At present we are dependent on Tucker's spare time, which hardly exists, and casual help from Moon and Alec Winter."

"Both members of the Naval Mission, and Alec Winter

THE END OF THE YEAR

is Mark Kerr's secretary. By the way Kerr is not coming back."

"You know, I'm rather sorry to hear that," I said.

And indeed I was sorry to hear it. I believed then and I believe now that, if Admiral Kerr had returned, it would have been possible to avoid much that happened later. Kerr had just telegraphed from Italy offering to bring anything I wanted from Capri. He liked me personally, and it was possible to argue with him. I got on very well with Cuninghame ; but it was impossible to argue with him. When he disagreed or did not wish to hear unwelcome facts, he simply made himself out to be more deaf than he really was. Moreover, by now his Francophobia was become so acute that he could not help believing the tales on which he was fed like the rest of those who sympathized with the position of the King. Admiral Kerr must have seen the necessity for dispelling from the King's mind the fantastic lies he was being told and at the same time he would have been able to lay before him the facts we had and obtain from him a genuine inquiry into the truth. What might have been equally valuable, he would have had an opportunity to provide us with evidence of those plots against the King. But this is only one more of those unfinished conditional sentences. . . .

"It may be wise to notify the Government of this Bureau of Information," Sir Francis said.

"We can provide cards with the photographs of the men attached. These might be signed and countersigned, and if there are any complaints of any action by individuals, we can be notified of the culprit. Of course the secret agents will remain my responsibility."

So Sir Francis Elliot formally notified the Greek Government of this Bureau of Information, and the Greek Government accepted its existence without demur.

"Well, now this Bureau of Information is under my

wing," said Sir Francis, "I should like to know something more about it. At present it sounds rather vague and unsatisfactory."

"Money is the chief problem, sir. I really don't know what to do unless it arrives soon. And we *must* have clerical help. Then there is this big new show which the French are starting. I presume you will want to be kept informed of what they are doing and planning. And there is the problem of the naval Intelligence for Sells. He feels that it ought to be concentrated in his hands, and I quite agree. At present it is financially controlled by Waugh, but otherwise not controlled at all except, I suppose, to some extent at Mudros. Naturally, most naval Intelligence is a matter which the Navy can deal with best on the spot but it seems rather absurd that the C Organization should find all the money for such work when money is so urgently needed in Athens. I do not understand why the Navy should be financed from here. Sells wants a motor boat put at his disposal. Rogers is Waugh's man, and anyway the *Valkyrie* is no good except for work that does not require speed."

"Wouldn't Waugh contribute something from his funds toward the work you and Sells do?"

"We've tried that, but he wrote back that he had no money to spare. The whole thing is really in a muddle. You see, the situation has changed even since V left. The importance of Athens is growing all the time. We have this nervousness up at Egypt over a Turko-German invasion, and we have this new French Bureau with all sorts of plans for the future. This show cannot be run any longer as a small branch of a semi-secret organization in Alexandria which really exists for the sole purpose of obtaining military information about the Turks."

"Well, the best thing you can do, Mackenzie, is to prepare a report on the present constitution of this Bureau of

THE END OF THE YEAR

Information. Make any suggestions you can think of, and if I approve of the report I will send it back to London with Sells early next month. Things cannot go on in this vague state any longer."

I still have a draft of that report, which was flung like a new Apple of Discord before the contending deities of Whitehall. What happened to it will be related at the beginning of the next volume.

On December 30th, the enemy consuls and agents were expelled from Salonica and the consular archives seized by the Allies. 20 Austrians, 17 Turks, 12 Bulgarians, and 5 Germans in all were eliminated. The centre of espionage in Salonica was discovered to be the Austrian Consulate, a most significant comment on the origins of the war. In Athens we had so far found no traces of Austrian activity. It would have been very useful for us to have the results of the examination of the various papers seized; but no report was sent from Salonica, in spite of several requests by Sir Francis Elliot. It was the British Minister who had to answer the protest of the Greek Government against the expulsions, and this neglect to supply him with any information was something more than careless. Later on, dribbles of information about the double-dealing of members of the Government trickled through, some of which could we have received it in time would have been of inestimable value.

Under the date of January 22nd, 1916, I find in the last letter I wrote to Deedes the following paragraph:

Salonica. I had a dismal account of the contre-espionage there, and, judging by the entire absence of information of any kind whatsoever, the picture was not exaggerated. . . . The Minister received this week two or three items of information culled from the Consulate raid, one of which might have changed the political situation here, providing as it does documentary evidence against

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

Gounaris . . . but it is now too late to use it with any effect. The Military Authorities evidently did not realize in the least the importance of what they were sending. We know that there are numbers of other documents still to be produced, but apparently nothing on earth will induce A.H.Q. to pass them on to us. Meanwhile, the Foreign Office has telegraphed urgently asking us for information. What is to be done? I do wish that you could get an urgent and peremptory telegram sent from G.H.Q. on this subject.

But by this time Deedes and G.H.Q. were in Egypt, and in the Mediterranean Creed we have had a glimpse of the state of affairs there. The grasp of G.H.Q. M.E.F. over A.H.Q. Salonica was already weakening. As for the branch of the E.M.S.I.B. at Salonica it might have been on another planet from the branch of the E.M.S.I.B. in Athens. The B or contre-espionage side of it under Hugh Whittall was not allowed to communicate with me except by way of Alexandria, though for matters of grave urgency I was later on authorized to communicate through Matthews with Morgan who was in charge of the A work in Salonica. The fiction that we were an organization to obtain military information about the enemy, with a faint interest in trying to prevent the enemy's obtaining information about ourselves, was being doggedly maintained. In consequence of this veto some urgent information round about this time was transmitted through the Legation to Consul-General Wratislaw.* Consul-General Wratislaw being at odds with the E.M.S.I.B. in Salonica, a hornets' nest was stirred up by this procedure, and telegrams came from London and Alexandria forbidding me to dare ever again to short-circuit the E.M.S.I.B.

I have overdrawn on 1916 in writing about the enemy

* A. C. Wratislaw, C.B., C.M.G., C.B.E.

consulates, but I wanted to give some impression of the atmosphere of uncertainty in which the New Year greeted what was known in London and Alexandria as the B Branch in Athens of the Eastern Mediterranean Special Intelligence Bureau,* but in Athens itself by due notification to the Greek Government as the Bureau of Information attached to the British Legation in Athens. From the moment that Sir Francis Elliot instructed me to sit down and write my report on the Bureau in Athens a long departmental war was inevitable. Mine was the hand that launched a thousand slips, but he flung the apple. However, as Napoleon said, in war we can see our own mistakes but not the mistakes of the enemy. A departmental war more circumscribed but not less bitter was being waged by the Germans in Athens throughout 1916. Nor were our Allies the French and the Italians without their internal disagreements. Later volumes will celebrate more fully these battles between rival departments and rival branches and rival Services, battles that were fought with a ferocity and endurance which could not but evoke the admiration of readers, were the prime inspiration of such struggles a little more admirable.

The news of the expulsion of the enemy consuls at Salonica had a chastening effect upon the Greek Government. It had an equally chastening effect upon myself, for I realized that much of the work hitherto done at Salonica would henceforth have to be done in Athens, since we were now faced with an incursion of fresh enemy agents which would double the work that was already proving

* On looking again through some papers of the early part of 1916 I find that I have anticipated the naming of the Eastern Mediterranean Special Intelligence Bureau by three months. Apparently so late as March, 1916, it was still called Intelligence Section, Branch V, Alexandria, and I fancy that the name Eastern Mediterranean Special Intelligence Bureau was one of the more important results achieved by the Malta Conference of March, 1916. However, any confusion in the reader's mind I may have caused will only be a very faint reflection of the confusion in the minds of Sir Francis Elliot, Sells, and myself at the close of 1915.

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

beyond an inadequate staff and our straitened financial means.

On the last day of the old year I entertained at supper my section-chiefs and voluntary helpers in order to salute the coming year with appropriate sentiments. The Greek New Year being still thirteen days off, this celebration was supposed to represent our glee at the abominable breach of neutrality involved in the expulsion of the enemy consuls, and several earnest police-spies were busily engaged in taking notes at the Panhellenion with a view to sending in a report on such behaviour.

My own memory of the occasion is dominated by the figure of Clarence, who with the approach of midnight became a prey to sentimental broodings over his past and a profound concern for the future of his old mother. Tears of a quite unusual rotundity and consistency were trickling slowly down his cheeks, and I supposed he must have shaved and powdered for the festival just before it began.

"Skipper," he boomed as mournfully as the wind in an old chimney, "you and I understand what this sort of thing means."

"What sort of thing, Clarence?"

He shook his head.

"It's my old mother I'm thinking of. It's her I always think of on New Year's Eve. Ever since I was a nipper at school in Zurich."

"Shut up, Clarence," the brazen voice of Moon rang out. "You know you told me the other day you nearly broke her heart."

"So I did, Moon. So I did. That's what makes me feel so bad about her every New Year's Eve."

At this moment Prince intervened to know if we were seeing in the new year or seeing out the corpse. Prince was the other warrant-officer attached to the Naval Mission. He was the tough old salt in a novel by Marryat or Smollett,

THE END OF THE YEAR

and one could imagine him in the company of Roderick Random himself. Nothing more representative of the British Navy than Prince and Moon was conceivable. Yet either was the antithesis of the other. Moon represented the development of the warrant-officer through the years. In him we saw an ancestor who had fought at Trafalgar; but it would have been easy to believe that Prince's own whistle had been piped on board the *Victory*. He was a figure to be painted with the bold brush of a Gillray or a Rowlandson. I remember, as one remembers a scene in one of the great picaresque romances, Moon's description of Prince arriving back early one morning to come on board the *Hydra* after a merry night, in the course of which he had lost his naval cap and found instead the top-hat of a sand-stepping nigger, and not merely the nigger's hat, but a roll of his music which he was carrying under his arm like a spy-glass.

"There he was sitting in the stern of the dinghy which had been waiting for him by the quay all night, as grave as a blooming judge. And when he came up the side there wasn't a man on deck who dared smile as old Prince stalked aft to his cabin and told them not to wake him till to-morrow. And anything more laughable than he looked in uniform with that blessed nigger's tile perched on the top of his head and wobbling about like a blackbird I never saw. And when I went below to see if he was all right I found him trying to read the music and cursing because they printed their newspapers in Greek. Well, I tell you I went to my own cabin and laughed to myself for an hour."

Though Prince always spoke with contempt of the Greek script, he fancied himself very much as a speaker of the language, and woe to the waiter who ventured to look puzzled by his orders or to answer him in English.

"Why, good lord, all you want to know in this language is okey-okey, and you'll get anything you want. Here,

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

you son of a gun, what are you grinning at? Didn't you hear me order ennabirra? Okey-okey, I suppose, to beer? Very well, ferry me a whisky and soda and look gleegora."

"A whisky soda? Sairtainly, Mr. Prince," the waiter would answer full of good will.

"Here, come back," Prince would cry. "Stand still, you fidgety little monkey. Look here, can't you understand your own blooming language? When I speak to you in Greek, I don't want to be answered in your unnatural English. Catallabet?"

"μάλιστα, κύριε."

"That's better. Caller! Polly caller! Now buzz off."

So, when this evening Prince interrupted Clarence to ask whether he was seeing the new year in or seeing out the corpse, his forceful personality demanded an answer.

"Prince, I didn't expect that from you," said Clarence.

"Maybe you didn't, Clarence, but you got it. See?"

"Prince, this is the last day of the old year."

"Who said it wasn't?" demanded Prince, with a thud of his great fist upon the café table. "That's the point I'm making. It is the last day of the old year. It's not a funeral."

Clarence's reply was to roll up his sleeve and display the long livid scar on his forearm.

"La Bassée last December," he muttered hoarsely. "You never had a Hun stick his bayonet through your arm, Prince."

"Nor did you, Clarence," somebody declared from the back. "You got that scar when somebody went for you with a glass mug in a café at Salonique two years before the war started."

I was reminded of Mr. Bardell who, according to Sergeant Buzfuz, 'after enjoying for so many years the esteem and

THE END OF THE YEAR

confidence of his sovereign, as one of the guardians of the royal revenues, glided almost imperceptibly from the world to seek elsewhere for that repose and peace which a custom-house can never afford,' but who had actually met his end by being knocked on the head with a quart-pot in a public-house cellar.

"La Bassée," Clarence repeated solemnly.

"Bass more like," Prince contradicted.

"My poor old mother never knew how near she was to losing me," Clarence declared, wiping away a tear which fell on the floor of the café like a slap-bang.

"But you told us the other day your mother was dead," somebody else jeered.

"Skipper," said Clarence, turning to me his great dark animal's eyes and speaking with extreme emotion, "Skipper, you and I understand what it means. Am I right? I say nothing. Let others laugh. Is my work good? That's all I ask. If it's no good, send me back to the trenches. Others brag about what they do. I say nothing."

"Yes, you do," Prince contradicted, with some truculence in his tones. "You say a blooming sight too much."

"Prince, I'm not speaking to you to-night," Clarence declared.

"And which is not the point," Prince insisted. "The point is 'am I speaking to you?'"

Somebody reminded the party that the clock was striking twelve. Clarence, the tears now streaming down his cheeks, rose and offered a solemn if slightly pompous welcome to the New Year.

Thus grotesquely for me was ushered in the grotesque year of 1916.

Half an hour later Davy Jones was telling me of a queer individual with hunched shoulders, heavy black moustache, and thick glasses, who was coming in a furtive manner every evening about nine o'clock to the German Legation.

FIRST ATHENIAN MEMORIES

It proved to be an auspicious opening of the New Year for my agent, but not for the man with thick glasses, for he was arrested in Egypt a few weeks later and interned for the remainder of the war.

END OF VOLUME TWO

INDEX

A

- Abbot, G. F., 34, 380.
 Abyssinia, 264.
 Acropolis, 17-8, 151.
 Adalia, 148.
 Adamiti, Bay of, 309.
 Aga, Spiro, 353.
 Aidin, 40.
 Aivatoğlu, Charalambos, 354.
 Albania, 37, 143, 298.
 Aldershot, 95-100.
 Alexander, King, 51.
 Alexandretta, 39, 308-9.
 Alexandria, 207, 256, 345-6, 348, 386.
 Alexandropoulos, M., 27-8.
 Altham, Lt.-Gen. Sir Edward, 347-8.
 Anacapri, 323.
 Anatolia, 249, 253.
 Andrew, Prince, 160, 303.
 Antoniadès, John, 315-6, 318.
Apbrodite, The, 368.
Arabia, The, 150.
 Aravantinos, Dr., 2-3, 9-10, 61, 63, 65-6.
 Argostoli, 354.
 Asia Minor, 35, 37, 41, 52, 254.
 Ashref, Bey, 353.
 Aspasia, Princess, 51.
 Athanasius, Archbishop of Syra, 290-1.
Athenai, The, 326-9, 333.
 Austria, 27-30, 37, 39, 58, 147, 212, 215, 223, 225, 227, 235, 238, 242, 262, 326, 336-7, 387.

B

- Baden, George, *see* Tucker, Charles.
 Bailloud, General, 310.
 Baldwin, Stanley, 56.
 Balfour, Lord, 55.
 Balkan League, 37.
 Bax-Ironside, Sir Henry, 42-3.
 Béarn, Hector de, 363.
 Belgrade, 235-6.
 Bénazet, M., 229.
 Benecke, Mr., 86.
 Bertie, Lord, 179, 338.
 Bœotians, 369, 374.
 Bohemia, 147.
 Bonaparte, Prince Roland, 160.
 Bosdari, Contessa, 143-5, 154, 170.
 Bosdari, Count, 145-9, 166.
 Bosnia, 42.
 Boyle, Sir Edward, 295, 298-9.
 Braithwaite, General, 181-3.
 Braithwaite, Val, 181-4.
 Braquet, Colonel, 167.
 Breslau, 149, 212.
Breslau, The, 30-2, 37.
 Briand, M., 41, 308, 312.
 Bridgeman, R. O. C., 338.
 Brittany, 69-70.
 Broussa, 309.
 Buchanan, Sir George, 339.
 Bucharest, 255.
 Bucharest, Treaty of, 28-9.
 Budapest, 215.
 Budrum, Bay of, 254.

INDEX

- Bulgaria, 25, 27-30, 34-8, 42-4, 149,
180, 212 *et seq.*, 225-8, 236, 238, 275,
298, 302, 334.
Bulgaria, S.S., 191-2.
Burford, 186.
Buxton, Robin, 175-6.
Byron, 114-5, 121-2, 130-8, 270, 331.
- C
- C., 13, 75, 117, 120, 122-3, 344.
Cairo, 346, 348.
Calymnos, 249, 254.
Cambridge, 195.
Cantone, 323-5.
Capri, 141, 143-4, 261, 298, 322-3, 326.
Cardale, Admiral, 154, 163.
Carol, King, 37.
Carson, Sir Edward, 140, 238.
Carter, C. R., 85.
Casati, Marchesa, 143-4.
Castella, 350.
Catzegeoras, 329.
Cauchi (Clarence), 122 *et seq.*, 133,
135-6, 139, 200, 204-5, 242-4, 266,
269-70, 272, 317, 319-20, 331-2,
350-5, 368, 390, 392-3.
Cavalla, 37-8, 42-3, 50, 52, 222, 239,
352.
Cavour *see* Landi, A. Z.
Cephissia, 9, 60-1, 142, 158.
Chafy, 251.
Chalkis, 351, 353.
Chalmers, Lord, 195.
Chantilly, 308, 311.
Chassounian, Bedross, 351.
Chaundy, Mr., 87.
Chios, 251.
Chirol, Sir Valentine, 44, 140 (note).
Cholmeley, R. F., 304 (note).
"Christianity and Islam under the
Sultans," 199.
Christopher, Prince, 160.
Chryssospathi, Captain, 357, 379-80,
383.
Chrysosverghi, 266.
Churchill, Winston, 213.
Cithaeron, 369, 371-2.
Clarence *see* Cauchi.
Clemenceau, 310-11.
Cochin, Denys, 334.
Colonna, Cape, 355.
Constantine, King, 25 *et seq.*, 45-7,
51-2, 57-61, 76, 140, 146, 159-60,
166, 179, 211 *et seq.*, 226, 229-33,
245-7, 259-61, 306, 313, 333-4, 380.
Constantinople, 36, 39, 47, 51-2, 148,
157, 175, 179, 184, 312, 335, 338.
Cookson, Mr., 85.
Copais, Lake, 368.
Corfu, 208, 237, 298.
Coundouriotis, Admiral, 20, 31 (note).
Craven, Lord, 77.
Crete, 43, 208-9, 250-1.
Croft, Brig.-Gen. Sir Henry Page, 97.
Cunninghame, Col. Sir Thomas Mont-
gomery, 56-61, 155, 222, 238, 246,
260, 307, 313, 338, 385.
Cunninghame, Lady, 57, 75-7, 158.
Cunliffe-Owen, Col. F., 241.
Cyprus, 165, 237, 239.
- D
- Danglis, General, 213, 218.
Dardanelles, 30-1, 36, 38-9, 47, 51,
149, 170, 179, 211-2, 228, 308, 310,
340.
Darwin, 174.
Davies, Bell, 191.
Dawnay, Guy, 175.
Dedeagatch, 213, 240-1.
Deedes, Brig.-Gen. Sir Wyndham, 9,
79, 109, 180, 190, 240, 271, 340,
387-8.

INDEX

Delcassé, M., 42.
 Demidoff, Prince, 34, 40, 158-9.
 Deville, M., 40.
 Dodecanese, 35, 148, 249, 251, 253-4.
 Doiran, 275.
 Douglas, Norman, 323-4.
 Dousmanis, General, 130, 228.
 Dragoumis, Stephen, 39, 235.
 Drama, 37.
 Droppers, Garrett, 169-70.
 Duveen, Mr., 240-1.

E

"Echo of Spoken Greek, An," 105.
 Edmonds, Consul-General W. S., 11, 13.
 Egypt, 35, 121, 149, 180, 207-10, 255-6, 264, 334, 346-9, 352, 366, 386.
 Eleusis, 48, 278, 338.
 Elliot, "Bijou," 320.
 Elliot, Lady, 335.
 Elliot, Sir Francis, 8-9, 40, 48, 53-5, 60-1, 72, 76, 80, 140 (note), 166, 201-2, 208-9, 221, 223-5, 230 *et seq.*, 238-9, 246, 275, 313, 365, 375, 384-7, 389.
 Ellwood, Trixie, 331-3.
 Enos, Gulf of, 179.
 Erskine, Hon. Sir William, 4, 58-60, 76, 194-6, 203, 276, 280-2, 284-5, 337, 344.
 Eskendrian, Agop, 330.
 Etaples, 183.
 Evzone, 156, 158.

F

Falkenhause, Major von, 260, 276, 313.
 Finlay, Captain, 336.
 Fitzmaurice, G. H., 236-7.
 Fiume, 297.

Fort Roupel, 302.
 France, 25, 32, 35, 38-43, 53, 58-9, 147-9, 165, 218, 224, 230, 235, 296, 308-12, 361, 363, 364-6.
 Franchet D'Esperey, Marshal, 309 (note).
 Francis Ferdinand, Archduke, 325.
 French, Colonel C. N., 125-6.
 French, Field-Marshal, 310.

G

Gallipoli, 36, 48, 179-80, 206-7, 228, 308, 340-1, 346, 366.
 "Gallipoli Memories," 200.
 Garnett, W. J., 236, 238, 337-8.
 Garton, Leslie, 316.
 George V., 35, 84.
 George, King, 26, 29.
 George, Prince, 41-2, 160, 170.
 George, Princess, 312.
 George, David Lloyd, 41, 55, 140, 312-3.
 Germany, 25-7, 29-34, 38-40, 47, 58, 140, 149, 160, 180, 207, 211 *et seq.*, 223, 225-7, 229, 235, 238, 247-8, 257 *et seq.*, 275, 302, 357.
 Ghika, Prince, 145.
 Giannakitsas, General, 313.
 Goeben, The, 30-2, 37.
 Goodhart, Heron, 5-8, 15, 76, 201-2, 238, 285-6, 291-5.
 Gounaris, M., 39-41, 43, 46, 235, 388.
 Gourand, General, 308.
 Grancy, Baron de, 260-4, 274, 276.
 Graves, Sir Robert, 80, 152, 180, 271.
 Great Britain, 32, 35-43, 52-5, 58, 147, 160, 165, 218, 230, 235, 255, 308, 310, 312, 365-6, 382.
 Grey, Lord, 35-7, 42-3, 54, 140 (note), 220-1, 224-7, 234, 237, 239.
 Guessarian, 329-30.

INDEX

- Guillemin, M., 154, 166, 224, 230, 232, 334.
 Gunstone, Richard, 81 *et seq.*
 "Guy and Pauline," 185-8.
 Gynes, 86-7.

H

- Hamilton, General, 221.
 Hamilton, Sir Ian, 8, 48, 79, 139-41, 176-80, 182, 190, 213, 220.
 Hardinge, Lord, 339.
 Hare, Dr., 181-2, 184.
 Harris, Walter, 229-30.
 Hasluck, F. W., 197-9, 272, 317-8, 322, 326-8, 333, 341-2.
 Hasluck, Margaret, 198.
 Hastings, W. H., 31.
 Hatchadourian, Sahag Nesrop, 350.
 Haynes, E. S. P., 299.
 Head, 69.
 Heathcote-Smith, Consul, 116, 251.
 Helen, Grand Duchess, 142, 159-61.
 Helicon, 371.
 Herzogovina, 42.
 Hibben, Paxton, 304-6.
 Hicks-Beach, Ellice, 4-5.
 High Cross, 94-5.
 Hill, Lieutenant A., 209.
 Hodder, 251.
 Hoffmann, Herr, 259, 273, 354-6, 378.
 Hogarth, D. G., 254-5.
 Hore-Ruthven, 'Sandy,' 176.
 Hrvatska, S.S., 351.
 Hungary, 298.
 Hyde, Watney, 351.
 Hydra, The, 271.
 Hymettus, 18.

I

- Ilchester, Lord, 77.
 Imbros, 150, 176, 251, 311, 317, 340.

- Imogen*, The, 174, 181-2, 184-90, 192, 201.
 India, 36, 366.
 Italy, 29, 35, 40-3, 47, 53, 59, 140, 147-9, 235, 247-8, 253, 273, 280-1, 296-7, 312.

J

- Jagow, von, 32.
 Janina, Battle of, 170.
 Jeffries, J. M. N., 303.
 Joffre, General, 220, 309-10, 382.
 John, Augustus, 143.
 Johnston, J. L., 85.
 Jones, Davy, 356, 358-61, 393.
 Jones, Mr., 132-8.
 Joseph, 153-5, 196, 227, 276, 287-8.

K

- K69, 168.
 Keeling, Eddie, 12, 142-3.
 Kephala, 139, 174 *et seq.*
 Kerr, Admiral Mark, 30-2, 36, 45 *et seq.*, 57, 59-61, 163, 179, 385.
 Kitchener, Lord, 35-6, 140-1, 176, 310, 333-6, 338, 347.
 Krivolak, 215.
 Kuleli Burgas Bridge, 162, 172.

L

- L20, 152.
 Lacaze, Rear-Admiral, 365.
 Landi, Alberto Zanardi (Cavour), 240-4, 247-9, 266, 269, 272, 351-2, 354.
 Lawrence, D. H., 141.
 Lefcovitch, Colonel Goudim, 167.
 Leith, George, 163-4.
L'Homme Enchaîné, 310-11.

INDEX

- Liebig, (L), 14, 72-3, 80, 107-11, 115-6, 118-22, 130, 206-7, 236, 269.
- Lisa, 287-91.
- Lloyd, George, (Lord Lloyd of Dolobran), 79-80, 139-40, 148.
- London, Treaty of, 40.
- Londonderry, 104.
- Louis of Battenberg, Prince, 160.
- Lowther, Captain Hon. Lancelot, 149-50.
- M
- Macaire, Robert, 272-3.
- MacCarthy, Desmond, 58.
- McDonnell, Sir Michael, 101.
- MacDougall, Mr., 67.
- Macedonia, 38, 42-3, 165, 215, 223, 308, 357, 381-2.
- Mackie, Flight-Comm. T. D., 191-2.
- M'Mahon, Col. Sir Henry, 349.
- Mahon, General Sir Brian, 221, 310-11.
- "Makers of Modern Europe," 298.
- Malta, 121, 152, 273, 317, 355, 389 (note).
- Manos, Aspasia, 50-1.
- Marie Bonaparte, Princess, 41.
- Marienbad*, The, 338.
- Mariette, 7-8, 19 *et seq.*
- Markham, 203, 276, 280, 282-5.
- Marseilles, 219.
- Matthews, W. D. W., 341-5, 384, 388.
- Mavrogordato, John, 323.
- Max, *see* V.
- Maxwell, General Sir John, 347-8.
- Mediterranean Creed, 346-9.
- Ménard, M. *see* Ricaud, Capt.
- Mercati, M., 218.
- Messina, 30, 32, 247-8, 256, 326, 334.
- Metaxas, Colonel, 38-9.
- "Military Attaché in the Balkans, A," 222, 239.
- Millerand, M., 308, 311.
- Milne, Sir Berkeley, 31.
- Milne, Sir George, 311.
- Milner, Lord, 55.
- Mirbach-Harff, Count von, 259.
- Mombelli, Colonel, 168-9, 247-8, 273-4.
- Monastir, 25, 239, 335, 357.
- Montenegro, 28, 143.
- Moon, Lieut., 270-1, 276, 384, 390-91.
- Morgan, James, 241, 388.
- Moschopoulos, General, 220.
- Mudros, 168, 175, 219, 221, 256, 317, 350, 386.
- Munthe, Dr. Axel, 143-4.
- Murray, General Sir Archibald, 347-8.
- Mustapha Kemal, 312.
- Myres, J. L., 249, 252-4.
- Mytilene, 18, 74, 116, 208, 251, 317, 319.
- N
- Napier, Colonel H. D., 222, 236, 238-9, 307, 313, 335-8, 352, 357.
- Naples, 317, 322.
- Nevinson, Henry, 298.
- Nicholas, Prince, 159-60, 231.
- Nicholas, Princess, 142, 159-61.
- Nichols, Beverley, 261-2.
- Nicolson, Sir Arthur (Lord Carnock), 53-4.
- Nish, 142, 235.
- Norcup, Mr., 210.
- O
- O'Beirne, Mr. 43, 238.
- Odessa, 37.
- Overton, Rev. Arnold, 94.
- Overton, Tom, 90-2, 94.
- Oxford, 81 *et seq.*, 194-6, 249.

INDEX

P

- Pachich, M., 27.
 Panhellenion, 7-8, 129, 292 *et seq.*,
 315, 352, 390.
 Papeconomou, 268, 350.
 Pappas (P.), 266, 353.
 Parnassus, Mt., 371-2.
 Parthenon, 151.
 Patissia, 331.
 Patras, 247, 333.
 Paula, Princess of Saxe-Weimar, 230.
 Pears, Col. G. B., 101.
 Petros, 156.
Phaeton, The, 190.
 Phaleron, 19-23, 49, 171, 191.
 Philandros, 269, 350, 352.
 Piræus, 122, 128-9, 191, 207-10, 243,
 247, 271, 273, 278-9, 333, 350, 352,
 355, 363.
 Pirie-Gordon, Harry, 249, 341.
 Plattner, 329.
 Poincaré, M., 309 (note).
 Pola, 30, 262.
 Poland, 147.
 "Political Memories," 231.
 Port Iero, 251.
 Portsmouth, 103-4.
 Potsdam, 26-7.
 Potts, Captain, 2, 18, 184, 200-2.
 Prince, 390-3.
 Proctor, Bertha, 331-32.

Q

- Quiller-Couch, Sir Arthur, 195.

R

- Radislavoff, M., 43.
 Rawlins, Consul, 250, 367.
 Rendel, G. W., 2-7, 60-1, 72, 76.
 Rhallis, M., 39, 235.
 Rhodes, 35, 253-4.

- Ricaud, Engineer Captain, 363-4,
 375-9.
 Robertson, Adam, 367-8, 371-4.
 Rodd, Sir Rennel, 274.
 Rodocanachi, Jack, 145.
 Rogers, Lt.-Commander, 162, 171-3,
 386.
 Rome, 280.
 Rome Conference, 55.
 Roquefeuil, Comte de, 167, 362-5.
 Rothermere, Lord, 298.
 Roumania, 29-30, 36-7, 147, 255, 298,
 334.
 Russia, 30, 39-40, 42-3, 47, 53, 59,
 148, 160, 227, 230, 275, 312, 339.

S

- St. Omer, 308.
 Salamis, 48, 314.
 Salonica, 25-6, 29, 41-2, 120, 140
 (note), 148, 165, 169, 180, 211, 215,
 220-6, 228, 241, 275, 307-12, 315,
 333-5, 340-1, 357, 363, 377, 387-9.
 Sami Bey, 353.
 Samos, 251, 253.
 Sankey, Lord, 69, 71.
 San Michele, 143-4.
 Sarandraporon, 26.
 Sarraill, General, 179, 212, 220, 308-12,
 365, 376.
 Sartorius, Colonel, 92.
 Schenck, Baron, 47, 77-8, 115, 121,
 138, 246, 257-60, 273, 350, 363-4,
 378.
 Secker, Martin, 185.
 Sells, Rear-Admiral W. F., 2, 209,
 251-2, 263, 344, 361-2, 364-6, 368-9,
 371, 386.
 Serbia, 27-9, 34-5, 37-8, 42-3, 143,
 147-9, 180, 212 *et seq.*, 225, 227-8,
 235-6, 238, 297, 335.
 Servos, 269, 350.

INDEX

Sforza, Count Carlo, 298.
 Shorncliffe, 102.
 Simpson, Lieutenant H. A., 1 *et seq.*,
 15-17, 19 *et seq.*
 "Sinister Street," 81-3, 185, 190,
 323.
 "Siren Land," 324.
 Skouloudis, M., 313-4, 334.
 Smyrna, 40-1, 52, 148, 242, 266, 309,
 313, 353.
 Smyth, Lt. G. M., 86.
 Sofia, 236, 238, 255, 275.
 Sonia, The, 202.
 Sophie, Queen, 32, 261-2.
 Southsea Common, 102-3.
 Spencer, Captain, 126.
 Spencer, Mr., 69, 71.
 Spetzai, The, 317, 320-1, 326, 335-7,
 350, 352.
 Staichos, Captain, 130, 228.
 Stratos, M., 320-2.
 Stavro, 156-8, 196, 227.
 Steed, Wickham, 297.
 Stone, E. D., 358.
 "Story of San Michele," 144.
 Strumnitsa, 215.
 Streit, Dr. Georges, 27-9, 34-5.
 Suez Canal, 264, 318.
 Suvla, 43, 90, 175-6, 213, 221.
 Switzerland, 93, 198, 247, 343.
 Syra, 31, 158, 267, 278, 288-9.
 Syria, 39, 308.

T

Talaat Bey, 36.
 Talbot, Mr., 301-3.
 Talbot, Sir Gerald, 72.
 Taranto, 150, 262.
 Tashjian, 329-31.
 Tatoi, 16-17, 213, 218.
 Tennessee, The, 291.

Tennyson, Lord, 358.
 Tenos, 262-3.
 Tetovo, 215.
 Thebes, 369.
 Theotokis, John, 39, 226, 235.
 Theotokis, Nicolas, 30, 32-4, 212.
 Thrace, 35, 43, 165, 239.
 Transylvania, 37.
 Travlos, 288.
 Tsitsopoulos, 266-8, 272, 276, 288-90.
 Tucker, Charles (B.), 13, 72, 109 *et seq.*, 128-9, 133-8, 140, 152, 157-8,
 162, 171-3, 203-6, 244, 268-9,
 271-2, 276-7, 286, 291, 293-5, 317,
 319-20, 333, 336, 342, 349, 356, 376-
 7, 382.
 Tull, 69.
 Turkey, 25, 27-30, 35-40, 140, 162,
 180, 206-7, 213, 223, 226, 235-7,
 242, 253, 266, 329-30, 366.
 "Twenty-Five Years," 35, 224-5.
 Tyrrell, Colonel G. E., 175.

U

United States, 169.

V

V., 9 *et seq.*, 72-5, 80, 109-14, 116-20,
 122-3, 137-8, 157, 161-3, 203, 206,
 236-7, 241, 250-1, 265, 274, 276,
 316-8, 335, 341-2, 344-5.
 Valkyrie, The, 162, 171-3, 386.
 Van Someren, 69.
 Vardar, 215, 335.
 Vaughan, Cardinal, 92.
 Venizelos, M., 20, 25 *et seq.*, 34 *et seq.*,
 47, 51-4, 76-7, 139-40, 147-9, 159,
 177, 202, 211 *et seq.*, 223-7, 230,
 234-5, 245-7, 258, 307, 312-4, 335,
 339, 380-2.

INDEX

Vincenzo, 322-4, 325-6.

Vitale, Captain, 248.

Vlaicos, 269, 351.

W

W., 13.

Wace, A. J. B., 194-6, 207, 209, 280,
349.

Walker, F. W., 72.

Waller, Vice-Consul, 293-5.

Ward, Captain Hon. John, 192-3.

Ward, Colonel, 175.

Warre-Cornish, Mrs., 58.

Warren, Sir Herbert, 45.

Watson, Dr. Seton, 297.

Waugh, Sir A. T., 157, 209, 251, 253,
386.

Weir, 204-7, 243, 264-9, 272, 274, 276,
317, 352-5.

Wells, Captain, 165-6.

Whittall, Hugh, 241, 388.

Williamson, 69.

Wilhelm II, 25, 29-30, 32.

Williams, Orlo, 189-90.

Wilson, Captain Stanley, 335-7, 357.

Wilson, Woodrow, 160.

Winter, Alec, 63, 384.

Winter, Rachel, 63.

Wratislaw, A. C., 388.

Y

Yorghi Krikas, 329.

Z

Zaïmis, M., 234, 313.

Zammit, 269.

Zimbrakakis, Colonel, 383.

Zographos, M., 40, 46.

Zorki, 168.

GALLIPOLI MEMORIES

by

COMPTON MACKENZIE

*Selected by the Book Society
as "The Book of the Month."*

"Delightfully written; it abounds in acute observation and felicitous phrase."
—*Clemence Dane in The Bystander.*

"A contribution of historical value to the literature of the war."—*Times Literary Supplement.*

"A wholly delectable volume." —
Sunday Times.

"Undeniably brilliant."—*Sphere.*

"Refreshingly sincere—deserves a high place among authentic documents of the war."—*New Statesman.*

"Its mingled strands of beauty, humour, drama, historic facts, and creative dialogue are composed into one work of art."—*Graphic.*

"Written with a superbly light and easy style, equally sensitive to humour and beauty—translates the reader to its own time and place with an all but physical reality."—*Evening Standard.*

7/6 net

Cassells, La Belle Sauvage, London, E.C.4

